

## Christ's Message of Victory — How to be Clad with Armor for the Final Conflict

For the very last hours of probationary time, the Lord has reserved in His Word a mighty Message of great power for everyone who accepts it. This Message opens up the flood-gates of wisdom, giving a better understanding of the entire Scriptures, and bringing great power into one's life. It is "the solemn testimony upon which the destiny of the church hangs".

This testimony will "work deep repentance; all who receive it will obey it, and be purified" (EW.270).

Those who heed this message are pictured as being "clothed with an *armor* from their head to their feet . . . And I heard those clothed with the *armor* speak forth the truth with power" (EW.271). "Clad in the *armor* of Christ's righteousness, the church is to enter upon her *final conflict*" (PK.725). The Spirit of Prophecy always applies the symbolical "*war*" or "*conflict*" prophecies of the Bible in relation to the conflict being waged between the forces of good and evil.

The conflict which occurred between the sun-worshipping Canaanites and Israel (described in Judges 4 and 5) at "*Megiddo*" (Judges 5: 19) is employed as a *type* of the conflict which has ensued through the ages, and which will reach its climax immediately prior to the second coming of Christ (Ps. 83: 9, 10; I Cor. 10: 6, 11 margins; Rom. 15: 4; Rev. 16: 16).

In the Spirit of Prophecy, the curse which God pronounced upon His professing people when the *typical* conflict between the forces of good and evil was waged at "*Megiddo*" is frequently applied to those among God's people today who are not fighting "the good fight of faith" — see the many references given in the "Index to the Writings of Mrs. E. G. White", under Judges 5: 23. Nowhere in the Word of God can be found a greater or more solemn curse ever pronounced by God: "Curse ye Meroz, said the angel of the Lord, curse ye bitterly the inhabitants thereof; because they came not to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty".

That typical conflict fought at Megiddo was of great importance to Israel, for their enemies were mighty. These formidable foes must be defeated if Israel were to enjoy freedom from their tyranny. That conflict was to be decisive; it was not a time for indolence or neglect; no time for complacency, cowardice or self-indulgence. The inhabitants of Meroz (a word meaning "refuge") remained in their self-centred "refuge" whilst the battle raged, a battle in which the help of all was needed. How-

ever, through the intervention of God, Who commanded the angels to fight for Israel, the Israelites were victorious.

It is to this *typical* conflict between Israel and her sun-worshipping enemies that the Revelator makes reference in Rev. 16: 12-16 when describing the antitypical conflict between the forces of good and evil. Again, in the closing conflict, as at Megiddo anciently, the struggle will concern the true faith of Israel symbolized by the seventh-day Sabbath (Ex. 31: 13-17; Ezek. 20: 12, 20; Rev. 7: 1-2, etc.), and the false system of worship symbolized by the State-enforced keeping of Sun-day. Anciently, the worshippers of the sun "mightily oppressed the children of Israel" (Judges 4: 3). As the controversy between good and evil draws to its conclusion those led on by evil spirits (Rev. 16: 13) into rebelling against God's explicit Command will again "mightily oppress the children of Israel". As anciently, the Lord will commission the angels to fight for His people, and, as of old, Israel will be victorious in the conflict because the power of "the Captain of our salvation" will be "mightily displayed" as He sends "support to His soldiers" — see 8T.41 where is presented "A View of the Conflict."

Now, as of old, there will be those who will manifest a selfish attitude and remain apart from the mighty conflict which is even now raging in the antitypical Megiddo battlefield. These are they who will be recipients of the terrible curse of God. This is the message presented personally by our Lord Jesus in Rev. 16: 12-16, as may be observed by noting the pronoun "I" in v. 15 and in Rev. 22: 16.

We are "to take a bold and unyielding stand for the truth, and to sacrifice for God and His cause" (EW.50). "If a brother is teaching . . . truth, they ought to take their stand at his side" (TM.110).

God's blessing rests upon those who "take a bold and unyielding stand for the truth". He says: "There shall not a man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life . . . I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee . . . Only be strong and very courageous . . . Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest" (Josh. 1: 5-9). "Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of My righteousness" (Isa. 41: 10). "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world" (Matt. 28: 20). "Resist the devil, and he will flee from you" (James 4: 7).

The call of Christ and the commands of God are all addressed to the individual. The Ten Commandments are written in the singular number. In the messages to the seven churches (Rev. 2 and 3), Christ addresses the individual: "*He* that hath an ear, let *him* hear"; "*to him* that overcometh", etc., etc. "The relations between God and *each* soul are as distinct and full as though there were not another soul for whom He gave His beloved son" (Steps to Christ, p. 105).

"The Lord abhors indifference and disloyalty in a time of crisis in His work . . . His special blessing accompanies the labors of men of action; men who will not be swerved from the straight line of duty, but who with divine energy will inquire, 'Who is on the Lord's side?' (Ex. 32: 26), who will not stop merely with the inquiry, but who will demand that those who choose to identify themselves with the people of God shall step forward and reveal unmistakably their allegiance to the King of kings and Lord of lords . . . Their work is to catch the light from the Word, and let it shine forth to the world in clear, steady rays. Fidelity to God is their motto" (PK.148).

"God cannot use men who, in time of peril, when the strength, courage and influence of all are needed, are afraid to take a firm stand for the right. He calls for men who will do faithful battle against wrong, warring against principalities and powers, against spiritual wickedness in high places. It is to such as these that He will speak the words: 'Well done, good and faithful servant; . . . enter thou into the joy of thy Lord'" (PK.142).

To those who have not had their attention particularly drawn to the Saviour's personal Armageddon message, it may come as a surprise to learn that in Rev. 16: 12-16 our Lord does not depict a military conflict, but portrays the terminal of the great conflict which has raged down the ages since the inception of sin. There is not the slightest justification for believing that these verses portray a military, Palestinian conflict of nations. By the word "war" or "battle" (The R.V. keeps to the word "war" throughout), the Revelator describes the great controversy between Christ and Satan from the time they warred in heaven until the consummation of all things at the end of the Millennium — see Rev. 12: 7, 17; 13: 7; 16: 14; 17: 14; 19: 19; 20: 8.

The Bible was written to make the child of God wise regarding this "*war*", and to give him strength to "*fight* the good *fight* of faith" (I Tim. 6: 12). We are admonished to "*war* a good *warfare*" (I Tim. 1: 18). When describing the fierce conflict which is now being waged between those serving in the Lord's army and those on the side of the Lord's enemy, Paul likens the

Christian to a soldier with his armor on, fighting with "the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God" (Eph. 6: 11-17). This conflict is as real as any war between nations, is more continuous and more extensive than any material struggle between nations, and requires from the Christian as much patience, perseverance, and ceaseless struggle as in any international conflict.

"The weapons of our warfare are not carnal" (2 Cor. 10: 4). "Endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life that he may please Him who hath chosen him to be a soldier" (2 Tim. 2: 3, 4).

By our natural birth we inherit a disposition that fights against God: "The carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the Law of God, neither indeed can be" (Rom. 8: 7). Those who oppose truth "fight against God" (Acts 5: 39). "The enemies of God's Law, from the ministers down to the least among them . . . They find that they have been fighting against God" (GC.640).

Satan made "war" in heaven, and makes "war" on the remnant (Rev. 12: 7, 17). The beast made "war" upon the saints (Rev. 13: 7). The powers of earth make "war" upon the Lamb (Rev. 17: 14). The beast and the false prophet make "war" on "the King of kings and Lord of lords" in connection with "the mark of the beast" (Rev. 19: 19, 20). The Lord Jesus makes "war" upon "the beast, and the kings of the earth" because of their enforcement of the mark of the beast and their persecution of His people (Rev. 19: 11-21). All the wicked when raised to life at the end of the millennium make "war" or "battle" upon Christ and His church then inside the walls of the New Jerusalem (Rev. 20: 8). "As the wicked went into their graves, so they come forth, with the same enmity to Christ and the same spirit of rebellion . . . the armies of the lost" (GC.662, 663).

"There was war in heaven. Angels engaged in the battle; Satan wished to conquer the Son of God" (E.W.146). God's servant employs "conflict" as a synonym for "war" as may be seen when comparing the last extract with the next one: "The great conflict that Satan created in the heavenly courts is soon, very soon, to be forever decided. Soon all the inhabitants of the earth will have taken sides, either for or against the government of heaven" (7T.141). "The battles waging between the two armies are as real as those fought by the armies of this world, and on the issue of this spiritual conflict eternal destinies depend" (MB.172; PK.176; 7T.213; 1T.301, 302; 8T.141).

"From the very beginning of the great controversy . . . he [Satan] has continued the same warfare . . . The last great conflict

between truth and error is but the final struggle of the long-standing controversy concerning the law of God. Upon this battle we are now entering — a battle between the laws of men and the precepts of Jehovah, between the religion of the Bible and the religion of fable and tradition. The agencies which will unite against truth and righteousness in this contest are now actively at work" (G.C.582).

"The wicked have fully united with Satan in his warfare against God . . . Now the controversy is not alone with Satan, but with men" (GC.656).

"The Christian will feel the promptings of sin, but he will maintain a constant warfare against it . . . There is earnest warfare before all who would subdue the evil tendencies that strive for the mastery" (GC.469, 490).

"The warfare against self is the greatest battle that was ever fought. The yielding of self, surrendering all to the will of God, requires a struggle" (SC.46).

"He who has determined to enter the spiritual kingdom will find that all the powers and passions of unregenerate nature, backed by the forces of the kingdom of darkness, are arrayed against him. Each day he must renew his consecration, each day do battle with evil. Old habits, hereditary tendencies to wrong, will strive for the mastery, and against these he is to be ever on guard, striving in Christ's strength for victory." (AA.477).

"The Captain of our salvation will strengthen His people for the conflict in which they must engage" (5T.137).

"Every soul that is not fully surrendered to God, and kept by divine power, will form an alliance with Satan against Heaven, and join in battle with Satan against the Ruler of the Universe" (TM.465).

"The Christian life is a battle and a march. In this warfare there is no release; the effort must be continuous and persevering. It is by unceasing endeavour that we maintain the victory over the temptations of Satan . . . All must engage in this warfare for themselves" (8T.313).

Thus the Spirit of Prophecy, in harmony with the Bible, frequently employs this same language when describing the spiritual conflict. The above are but a few examples of the expressions employed throughout the writings of the servant of the Lord giving to us the meaning of the "war" prophecies of the Bible. From that inspired source we are given the true meaning of the Armageddon prophecies. We will not repeat here the number of statements made by God's servant in which "Armageddon" is applied to the closing phase of the great controversy

between Christ and Satan. We refer the reader to my brochure: "The Spirit of Prophecy and Armageddon".

The Lord's servant has definitely stated that the church must be "Clad in the *armor* of Christ's righteousness" before entering "upon her final conflict". It is this all-important feature of the subject of Armageddon that Satan has succeeded in hiding from many of the remnant people by his deception concerning the military, Palestinian Armageddon. "The Sabbath question is to be *the issue* in the great final conflict in which all the world will act a part" (6T.352). The Sabbath is the "sign" of righteousness (Ex. 31: 13-17; Ezek. 20: 12, 20), and of restfulness and trust in God (Heb. 4: 10, 11; Matt. 11: 28, 29).

In so many ways the Lord has shown us through His servant that the graphic description of a mighty conflict given in Rev. 16: 12-16; 17: 14; 19: 11-21, etc., is *not* a portrayal of a military conflict between nations — between the "East" and the "West" — but a conflict in which God's people will be severely tested as to their loyalty to God through the keeping of God's Sabbath. This is the interpretation given by the Pioneers of the Advent Movement and the Spirit of Prophecy. Many godly Christians centuries ago taught similarly, as may be seen in the words of the hymns that they have bequeathed for our use (As an example, read the words of Hymn Number 359 in "Church Hymnal").

The belief that Rev. 16: 12-16 depicts a Palestinian "war" among nations is a counterfeit teaching which came in among us from outside sources. That deception is an important feature in the erroneous system of interpretation known as "Futurism", concerning which I quote from the "Source Book for Bible Students" (published by Review and Herald Publishing Association), p. 31; "The Jesuit Ribera, about A.D. 1580, may be regarded as the founder of the futuristic system in modern times". The Rev. Joseph Tanner, B.A., who is being quoted in the "Source Book", then makes a statement which all who teach the military, Palestinian Armageddon should take to heart. He says: "It is a matter for deep regret that those who hold and advocate the futuristic system at the present day, Protestants as they are for the most part, are thus really playing into the hand of Rome, and helping to screen the Papacy from detection as the Antichrist". The Scriptures plainly declare that the beast with the assistance of the false prophet leads the State (the dragon — TM.39) to make "war" upon the remnant church (Rev. 12: 17; 13: 11-18; 16: 13-16; 19: 19, 20), and thus leads the nations to their destruction in "the battle [or war—R.V.] of that great day of God Almighty . . . Armageddon". (The word "Armageddon" means "the mountain of destruction".)

The acceptance of the (military) Armageddon portion of the Papal-fostered system of Futurism has resulted in delaying the finishing of the Lord's work on earth, for the acceptance of this military interpretation of this most vital prophecy has hindered the proper understanding of *the subject of righteousness by faith, which is the very essence of the Armageddon message*. The slaughter to be meted out to the lost at "Armageddon" is being delayed — God's people are not ready because they have not grasped all that it is their privilege to grasp in the Lord's special message to His remnant contained in the central portion of His Armageddon revelation. He says: "Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame. And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon" (Rev. 16: 15, 16).

By comparing Rev. 16: 15 with Rev. 3: 18 and other parallel passages, we *know* that Rev. 16: 12-16 describes "the final conflict" involving God's people and their keeping of God's Sabbath, the "sign" of righteousness.

"God's tried and tested people will find their power in the sign spoken of in Ex. 31: 12-18" (9T.16). Only those thoroughly prepared by appropriating the gracious provisions obtainable by faith — that is, those "clad in the *armor* of Christ's righteousness" — will endure the severity of the coming test. The prophet Ezekiel declared that the prophets of Israel had "not gone up into the gaps, neither made up the hedge for the house of Israel to stand *in the battle in the day of the Lord*" (Ezek. 13: 5). The Spirit of Prophecy has applied this verse in connection with the "preparation" of the remnant church "for the end": "The Lord showed me that a great work must be done for *His people* before they could stand *in the battle in the day of the Lord* . . . many do not realise what they must be in order to live in the sight of the Lord without a high priest in the sanctuary, through the time of trouble. Those who receive the seal of God, and are protected in the time of trouble, must reflect the image of Jesus fully. I saw that many were neglecting the preparation so needful . . . *We* should, therefore, be drawing nearer and nearer to the Lord, and be earnestly seeking that *preparation* necessary to enable us to stand *in the battle in the day of the Lord*" (EW.69, 71).

It is members of the church who are urged to prepare "to stand in the battle in the day of the Lord" — all others will be destroyed in "Armageddon". "Satan hopes to involve the remnant church of God in the general ruin that is coming upon the earth"

(5T.294, 295). To accomplish this dastardly design Satan has devised a way — the military, Palestinian interpretation of Rev. 16: 12-16 — whereby Adventists might be deceived in regard to the standard of holiness to be obtained and *how* to obtain it. Rightly understood, *the Lord's Armageddon message reveals the secret of power and victory*; power to vanquish foes within and without through the Presence of the Almighty Lord Jesus. Revelation 16: 15 is a personal warning, exhortation, and encouragement from our Lord; its main appeal is a preparation for the close of probation, the obtaining of righteousness by faith in view of the coming world destruction, the reception of the seal of God — for all without it will be destroyed, as declared in Ezek. 9: 1-6; etc.

Christ's Armageddon Message, containing the secret of power and victory in the Christian life, Satan strenuously opposes, either by vigorously promulgating the erroneous interpretation — the Palestinian, military conception — or by obstructing the way for the spread of Christ's message of victory to those who heed His admonitions.

From those who have seen the light in my publications, we solicit help to publish further light. The light continues to grow brighter and brighter, but we need finance for further publications. We desire to more fully show that the all-important *subject of Righteousness by Faith is the very heart and essence of our Lord's message concerning "Armageddon"*.

Those who have not read my publications giving the Spirit of Prophecy interpretation of last-day prophecies as the King of the North, the Kings of the East, the Drying up of Euphrates, Armageddon, etc., we urge to write for advertising matter.

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