

FACING GOD'S ENEMIES

By

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The historic struggle between Christ and antichrist has become more open and obvious in recent days than in any time in the past century. Humanists, who in times past worked behind the scenes in education, government and the media, have now come out of the woodwork and are openly arrayed against Christ and the truth He reveals.

Christians find themselves surrounded by a multitude of enemies who seek to destroy their faith and witness and even the very moral fiber which holds civilization together. Almost every publication brings news of some new effort of the IRS to gain control over a Christian school or church. Congress is now considering legislation which could give the IRS such control over Christian schools and churches as is found today only in Iron Curtain countries. Parents have been imprisoned for seeking to give their children Christian education.

On many fronts the ACLU and the ADL, arms of the antichrist religion of Judaism, are opposing the liberties of Christians. Recently a local youth minister was refused permission to visit with his young people on campus, because he is connected with the church. The local Gideon Society, for the first time, was refused permission to continue distribution of God's word to students. In the meantime they are steadily bombarded with the lies of evolutionism.

Thee media wages a constant warfare against all that is Christian, leaving no stone of blasphemy unhurled in its efforts to denigrate Christ and all those who place their trust in Him.

Added to this is the great amount of false doctrines, false hopes, and false claims of prophetic expectation. The Christian is caused to fight many battles on all fronts at the same time. Indeed the camp of the saints is encompassed by the enemies of God.

We should not be surprised. All of this was foreknown by God, who is not a spectator in the contest but rather the central figure. The battle is the Lord's. He is the One around whom the entire struggle rages. David sang of Christ sitting on His throne, with His Father saying to Him, "Rule thou in the midst of thine enemies" (Psa. 110:1-2). Enemies are never put down without a great struggle. And while He puts down his enemies He raises up His saints. "When we were dead through our trespasses, (God) made us alive together with Christ (by grace have you been saved), and raised us up with Him, and made us to sit with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus" (Eph. 2:5-6).

The higher one is raised in faith to sit with the Master, the more vulnerable he becomes as a target of the enemy. It is no game. It is the decisive warfare of the universe and the stakes in it are no less than life and death.

In spite of the overwhelming odds, the Christian is inevitably the winner. The essence of this victory is not the kind of "win" the world sees, but a victory of faith. When one stands the test of faith he has won a victory. Paul was victorious when he was slammed into prison because he had kept the faith and had refused to escape danger by keeping silent. Instead of being defeated, he grew in spiritual stature as he suffered at the

hands of the Jews, but placed his faith in the Christ and His promise to ultimately raise him up to be like Himself.

Peter said that our grief in various trials was the means of testing and purifying our faith (I Pet. 1:6–7). What God wants is our faith, our loyalty, and the commitment of our lives to Him.

When we look around and see the tremendous power of the enemies' weapons and the mighty walls of his fortifications, we are tempted to tremble and despair over the seeming impossibility of standing against such odds. Backed with grants from government and vast amounts of money from private foundations, they also have the authority of higher education and the power of law behind them. The press, the television, the school, and most of the publishing and broadcasting resources are on their side.

What can we do? We must first inquire of the Lord, "What would you have me to do?" The answer may be surprising. The Lord does not command us to break down their strongholds and develop a competitive weaponry. Rather He commands faith. "This is the victory that overcomes the world, even our faith" (I John 5:4). At the Red Sea, Moses was told, "Stand still and see the glory of God." There was no way the Israelites could defeat the armies of Pharaoh. But this was not their task. Theirs was to obey, to cross the sea. It was God's business to part the waters and forthwith drown the enemy.

Time after time the enemies of Jesus sought to kill him, (Matt. 12:14, 26:4, Luke 22:2, John 5:18, 7:1, 8:37, 40) but were unable to do so. He said that no one else had power to take his life (John 10:18). Only when He was ready, and only because it suited His purpose, were they able to take Him, and even then it was Jesus Himself who gave His life. Christ exercises power over His enemies.

Many have been the opportunities the enemies of God have had against the church. We are so outnumbered at any time and in any place that, on a strictly humanistic basis, the entire cause of Christianity could be wiped out. But Christ is in the Church. The truth is the truth of Christ. He is able to overcome His enemies in ways never dreamed of by the world. He spoils their timing, confounds their thinking, sets them at odds with one another, blinds them to their opportunities and, for reasons which they never understand, defeats their carefully laid plans.

How often have we been so weakened by sickness or by sorrow that we might have given in to despair, unbelief or to some grievous sin, but the Lord did not allow us to be tempted in such a time of weakness. He promised never to let us be tempted beyond what we have strength to resist. How often we have had such a weak defense against the enemy's attack, but the Lord saw to it that the attack failed.

At other times we feel so capable, our strength so great, our defense so sure, and armed with such weapons of our own forging, that we go forth proudly to engage the enemy — only to be soundly beaten, because we fought in our own strength as if it were our victory to be won.

The power to win the battle belongs to the Lord and yet the battle is our individual and personal matter because faith is personal. Too long we have relied on the collective power of the group: churches, government unions, corporations, society, etc. Dependence on the collective power of any group diminishes the dependence upon Jesus Christ the Lord and thus diminishes faith in Him.

The individual becomes lost in society. He doesn't focus on personal integrity and character, but on the power of the group. As soon as that guarantee fails or is withdrawn, he is defeated and goes crying and whining for society (government or the church or some other collective) to do something.

The fact is that no group is any stronger than the Lord, and the Lord deals with individuals by faith. This is not to say that we are helpless and are to do nothing. Far from it. Faith without works is dead; that is, it is no faith at all unless it motivates us to act. But what action is to be taken?

The weapon — the only weapon — for the Christian is the sword of the spirit, the truth of God. When Jesus was tempted by Satan in the wilderness, His only defense was, "It is written." He knew the truth and used it to drive back and defeat the enemy. The apostles did the same thing. A handful of men without credentials, without financial resources, hounded by the Jews and the Romans from city to city, persecuted, beaten, and always facing impossible odds, kept repeating the truth of the gospel over and over wherever they went and Christ won the victory.

Many times the faithful believer fears defeat because the enemies of God seem superior by comparison. They appear strong, educated, full of wisdom and highly respected in the world. The Christian may have an image of himself as weak, ignorant and foolish in the eyes of man. But we must remember that "God has chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and has chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and the base things of the world, and the things that are despised, did God choose, yes, and the things that are not, that He might bring to nothing the things that are; that no flesh should glory before God" (I Cor. 1:26–29).

God can use the weakest and poorest of believers. All He requires is our true faith and submission to Him. To outward appearances, the twelve Jesus chose were men least likely to succeed. James and John were hot-blooded rebels, jealous and vengeful. Peter was impulsive and unwise. Matthew was a despised bureaucrat and Judas was a traitor. None of the others were impressive. But these men were used by the Lord in the great foundation of His eternal church. They appeared foolish and insignificant to the sophisticated Jewish hierarchy and extremely weak and ineffective to the officials of Roman power, but they "went everywhere preaching the gospel" and soon saw the overthrow of the whole Judaic system and the fall of the mighty Roman empire.

God can use you. Do not fear His enemies. The truth of God in your hand and on your lips is more powerful than all the lies of the renowned humanists the world can produce. "For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but mighty before God to the casting down of strongholds, casting down imaginations and every high thing that is exalted against the knowledge of God, and bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ" (II Cor. 10:3–5).

We are not in the battle for survival. We do not fear losing our lives. We have already given them up; they belong to Christ. Ours is not a fight for survival but the good fight of the faith, to hold forth the word of life in the face of God's enemies. The result is in God's hands, not ours.

Our responsibility is to be obedient to Him, and leave the victory to him. The enemy is primarily God's enemy and will have to answer to Him.

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