***The Breastplate of Righteousness,
the Gospel of Peace, and the Shield of Faith

RV20-01***

Please open your Bibles once more to Ephesians 6. As we study the book of the Revelation, we are studying the letter to the church at Thyatira. One of the things for which Jesus Christ commended this church was their service. We have been observing that Christians serve God daily in the midst of a warfare of Satan and his demons on one side, and God and His angels on the other side. So the Christian is first and foremost to be viewed as a soldier in the Lord's army, and one who is under constant attack as he seeks to make known the divine viewpoint of God from salvation to rewards.

Survival and victory in the angelic warfare requires thorough and constant training of the believer for spiritual combat. Christian soldiers are trained and equipped for this combat in the local church ministry under the teaching ministry of the pastor-teacher. That is the bottom line as to what the local church is all about. If Christian people were more instructed and more enlightened as to what a local church is all about (that it is a training station for spiritual combat and that it is an instruction point under the teaching ministry of God the Holy Spirit via the gift of the pastor-teacher), people would make such a mass exodus out of churches all over this metroplex area like you wouldn't believe, as they realized that they were being denied that training; the consequent spiritual wounds to which they were exposing themselves; and, the worst thing of all – the huge loss of eternal rewards as a result of incompetence in spiritual combat. Without training, you are incompetent. Without training for spiritual combat, you're as much of a loser as you are without training for earthly military combat. So Christian soldiers need training. They are in a warfare daily, and they are trained in the local church ministry.

The first point that we found in Ephesians 4:12, which gives us the training program for Christian soldiers, is stated as being for the perfecting of the saints. "For the perfecting of the saints" in the Greek language means, "For equipping the Christian soldier for spiritual combat." This equipping of the Christian soldier consists of a divine training program which has been provided for that purpose. We have seen that this program consists, first of all, of instruction in the techniques of the Christian life. These techniques are the means for living the Christian life. They are" confessing known sins; Bible study; spirituality; thinking divine viewpoint; and, prayer. You have to be taught how to do all those things if you are going to be competent in combat for the Lord.

The second thing we find in this program is the provision of certain items of combat gear. These are listed for us now in Ephesians 6:14ff. We have seen that the first item of combat gear is the belt of truth. The belt of truth is a depository of Bible doctrine truth in the Christian soldier's human spirit. This belt is secured through the grace system of perception. This is the grace system provided by God for learning spiritual phenomena. We went through that in detail. The basic item of the combat equipment for the Christian soldier is this belt of truth. Everything else is attached to this belt. Everything else hangs on it. The Christian soldier, because he is also a priest of God, is responsible for securing this training.

You'll never get to heaven and find an excuse for the fact that you are not well-trained. If you saw that training, and if you placed yourself under the authority of a certain pastor, and he did not come through, I can tell you that he is going to get into a lot of trouble. He will have a great deal of grief because he did not train his people. So for the pastor-teacher drill instructor, there is that responsibility for the Christian soldier. But the Christian soldier, as a priest, is also responsible to see to it that he's not sitting in some cockamamie church; not receiving this training; not keeping his training skills up to par; and, permitting himself to be put in a position where he becomes a spiritual casualty, and maybe even to the point of having his physical life taken by the Lord.

**The Breastplate of Righteousness**

So it's important to realize that you are responsible for the training that you need. The Christian, thus, is ordered by God the Holy Spirit to put on this belt of truth; to learn doctrine; and, to obey it. The next item of combat gear, in verse 14, is the breastplate of righteousness: "And having on the breastplate of righteousness." The breastplate analogy again refers to what Paul saw on the Roman soldier. In the Greek grammar, the words "having on the breastplate of righteousness" indicate that this has to be put on before the command at the first part of verse 14, which is "to stand." The command "to stand" means to be victorious. But the Greek grammar indicates to us that you cannot stand until you have first put on the breastplate of righteousness.

This breastplate is attached to the belt on the soldier in the Roman army. This breastplate, of course, covers the vital areas of the body. The lack of the breastplate would result in high exposure to injury in battle. We have a variation of this, of course, in modern times now. Subsequent to World War II, the flack vest was developed. During the Vietnam War, this was prominently worn by men in combat. So again, the torso area, that normally the ancient breastplate covered, was now covered by the flack vest which covers that same part of the body – those vital organ areas.

The breastplate here, we are told, is symbolic of righteousness. This is not a reference to the absolute righteousness which is imputed to the believer at salvation as the result of the baptism of the Holy Spirit, which places us into Christ. It is not the absolute righteousness which we hold by our position in Christ. This is something you are supposed to put on after you become a Christian ‐ not before you become a Christian, but after you become a Christian. All of these are items of combat gear for those who are already in the body of Christ. Therefore, Paul could not say to us, "Put on this righteousness" if he was referring to the position of absolute righteousness, because that we already automatically possess. This is something that you are capable of putting on.

The word "righteousness" here, therefore, refers to a lifestyle of right living. We call this experiential sanctification, as this is expressed in the moral code of the Bible. The most prominent moral code, of course, is the Ten Commandments. But there are other principles of morality spelled out throughout the New Testament Scriptures which are directed to believers that we are responsible to live up to. This is the kind of sanctified, godly, holy living that we are responsible for as a believer. How a Christian lives should indeed reflect his position of absolute righteousness.

A Christian with the belt of truth of doctrine in his human spirit has a divine viewpoint frame of reference to guide him in his conduct; in his speech; and, in his actions so that he is approved by God. That is the point. The belt of truth, to which the breastplate is attached, gives you the anchor point from which you have a frame of reference to knowing what is moral and what is immoral; what is right, and what is wrong; and, what is the thing that you should do in a certain situation, and what you should not do, as far as God's approval goes.

A Christian can put this on himself – this quality of godly living or righteousness in your experience. A Christian can also determine not to put this on himself. It is perfectly within your capabilities to live a godly life or to live an ungodly life. The breastplate of righteousness is actually an expression of spiritual maturity, which is developed in the believer's soul. It's a variation of the spiritual maturity structure, which in itself is an expression of right living.

A Christian soldier who willfully does not practice the biblical standards of morality is shot down in the angelic warfare. That is inevitable. Get that straight. A Christian who does not practice the biblical principles of morality, sooner or later, will get shot down. All of us violate these on occasion, but the willful persistence, "I won't turn around and change my mind" attitude about violation of biblical principles of morality will inevitably bring wound and destruction spiritually. By that I do not mean that you will lose your salvation. By that I mean you will lose the functioning capacity of your soul, and consequently, your capability for service and your storing of treasures in heaven. People who live under a grace condition (people who are oriented to the grace of God) are people who are often tempted to think that they can be sloppy relative to their day-by-day righteousness and living. You cannot be. God only allows you to go so far with dirt and egg on your face, and then He's going to lower the boom.

We have 1 John 1:9. That's why the technique of confessing known sins is so critical to clean that up all the time. But if you persist in willful daily violating the moral code of God, it will bring you down.

The breastplate of righteousness, therefore, protects the soldier's capacity for serving God in the angelic conflict. The demons leave the unbelievers, of course, to capitalize on their moral weaknesses. Revelation 12:10 tells us that Satan is constantly accusing you and me before the Lord Jesus Christ night and day of our evils and of our breakdown in the breastplate of righteousness. If it were not for the fact that Jesus Christ is our intercessor and our advocate, who, because of His death and the provision of His blood, is able to defend us on that basis, we would be thrown right back into hell. Our salvation is secure eternally, simply because we have Christ as our advocate, and He has adequate means of defense for us.

However, the devil is there calling attention to every violation of the moral code. This includes every act that is unbecoming of you and me as a Christian: every word; every thought; every conduct; and, every expression that is unbecoming of us (who are in Christ) is called to the Lord's attention.

The breakdown, of course, in some facet of right conduct is a crack in the armor that Satan is looking for, and I'll guarantee you that he will exploit it. These cracks begin small. Very often they are just a hairline crack in your breastplate. If you do not correct that immediately, it begins to get bigger and bigger until you are highly vulnerable to Satan's attack upon you, and to Satan being able to exploit that break. Spiritual wounds by Satan, of course, incapacitate us for service. If we do not correct that, we move to the point where we are guilty of the sin of death, at which point our lives are taken, and we are taken home to heaven.

**Reversionism**

One of the things, of course, that destroys the breastplate of righteousness is reversionism, or, as the old word used to put it: backsliding. This destroys our personal righteousness. It causes us to degenerate into worldliness. Again, there is a way by which this systematically happens. You do not become a worldly Christian overnight. You do not fall into reversion out of the clear blue. The breastplate of right conduct leads to reversionism. Reversionism leads to mental breakdown in the combat. All of this begins with negative volition to Bible doctrine.

We're covering vast areas of truth here that we've gone over in detail in other studies, but we're just covering the vast overview. But as you know, the apostle Paul again tells us that the believer is in the position where, when he goes negative to the Word of God and to the instruction he receives, a hardness develops upon his soul as the result of a darkness that develops on his mentality. The way the Scriptures put this is that a spiritual vacuum develops in the soul. You know what a vacuum does. A vacuum will not stay a vacuum. It wants to equalize, so it sucks in all of the human viewpoint; the false doctrine; the worldliness; and, everything that's followed up in society around us is drawn into the mind of the believer who has gone negative.

That's what you must understand happens to you when you permit the breastplate of righteousness to be damaged. Immediately a vacuum is set up in the soul. Human viewpoint is drawn in, and spiritual darkness descends, and under the condition of spiritual darkness, you start going hard in your soul. You get hard in your emotions; you get hard in your will; and, you get hard in your mind (in your thinking). All of the three basic facets of your soul begin to harden. Literally, the Scripture says that they become calloused over. So they are insensitive to what God is telling you, to the point where the Holy Spirit simply cannot get through to your will; He cannot get through to your thinking; and, He cannot get through to your emotions, because you have become so calloused as the result of the fact that you went negative to the Word of God.

Do not be so stupid as to be resistant to some instruction from the Word of God that you don't understand or that you don't think is really what's true. If you can't go along with it, just put it on the back burner, but don't go negative. Don't go striking out. Wait until the Lord gives you enlightenment to confirm that that's bad doctrine that you've heard, or to confirm the fact that you are the one who's out of line, and that the doctrine was good, and you need to change your ways and your viewpoint.

These callouses result in ungodly living, and thus the breastplate of righteousness is destroyed. The lust patterns of the old sin nature come to the front. Don't forget that you have a huge pattern of lust. You have a cluster of lusts that are resident constantly within your nature. That propensity to evil is a cluster of various evils, and it's just there waiting to surface at any point. Well, under the condition of the breastplate being damaged, these patterns of lust will surface, and they result again in ungodly conduct. Reversionism has the emotions of the soul running rampant, and carrying the believer into all kinds of carnal asceticism and pseudo righteousness in conduct.

**Materialism**

So we have some serious consequences when the breastplate of righteousness is damaged in the angelic warfare. Life gets tied to material things so that you can indulge various lusts. That's one of the things that results from the breastplate's damage. You find that materialism is the big thing. Your life is simply attached to material things, because material things open the door for you to indulge various lusts.

Your mind is possessed by bitterness and ill will. There is no attitude of grace in dealing with what you consider your rights or your feelings. When the breastplate of righteousness is not intact, you have no grace capacity. There is no rapport to work with others as a team. You're always fighting your fellow soldiers instead of living and let live, and taking it easy, and letting the Lord exercise vengeance and readjustments and reassignments and redistribution.

There is a lack of the spirit of inner peace and happiness. You're always in a turmoil. If you really were honest with yourself, you would admit to yourself that you're just sitting there waiting to pounce on somebody next. There is not just a relaxing in the Lord. When the breastplate is damaged, unbelievers and carnal Christians can ridicule the divine viewpoint truth which you as a Christian soldier represent, because your ungodly lifestyle has brought discredit and disgrace, and enabled the unbeliever to ridicule the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. These consequences are extremely serious, and they should not be taken lightly. The breastplate of righteousness (the breastplate of righteous living): without it, you are doomed in combat.

**The Gospel of Peace**

Then we have another item that is listed for us for combat in verse 15: "And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace" (the shoes of the gospel of peace). It is self-evident that a soldier's feet are crucial in battle. Once a soldier's feet are incapacitated, his mobility is restricted, and he cannot be used in combat. One thing a soldier has to have is feet that are operational in a combat battlefield situation. So great care is provided by the military to keep the feet operational. Great instruction is given. Extensive care is given to the very fact when you're issued your boots, the very shoes you wear are given you by people who are experts in analyzing the fit. Extensive care is taken to see that they do properly fit. Care is taken to properly break them in, and the proper care, and the proper socks, and the conditions of the battlefield to cope with those conditions so that the feet are constantly in good operational condition.

The issues of the shoes have to do with the fact of motivation. If your feet hurt, you don't want to move. If you don't want to move, you don't have much motivation for getting into the battle. That's true of other parts of the body that hurt. You frequently say that something hurts on you, and so you don't feel like doing something. But whatever it is, certainly if your feet hurt, you don't feel like getting out and jogging. I'll guarantee you that. You just don't feel like moving around. You don't have any motivation to get out there and to leap into the battle.

So here, when he says, "Your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace," he is talking about the gospel as a motivation. The gospel here, of course, refers to the good news revealed by God – the good news of a great solution for removing sinners from under divine wrath, all apart from any human works. That is good news: a grace solution for removing sinners from the wrath of God apart from any human doing. This good news releases a soldier from fear of facing God and finding himself without the absolute righteousness that God demands for entrance into heaven.

This has a bearing on funerals that I have to conduct. If I have to conduct your funeral, I'll tell you ahead of time the emphasis I'm going to make. The thing I try to make clear to people is that the person who is departed has faced God, and those of you who have survived are next in line. That's all my funeral service is all about. The person here is standing up and facing a God, and you're next in line. And this person has discovered, as you in time will discover, that the first thing this God wants to know is: "Do you have absolute righteousness? If not, you don't come into My heaven."

So therefore, here is a matter of peace which the gospel gives to the heart of the Christian soldier that enables him to have motivation to move into battle. You do not feel much like serving the Lord where you're worried about the fact that you may go to hell the next second if you should die. If your destiny is a thing that's eating away at your soul, you're not too concerned with what's happening to other people, and you're not too concerned about putting yourself out in the angelic conflict for others. You're concerned about yourself.

So this good news releases a soldier from the fear of finding himself before God without the absolute righteousness he needs to enter heaven. God has said that the gospel is a gospel that will bring peace to your soul, because it assures you that you will have that absolute righteousness imputed to your credit. This sense of peace produces morale on the battlefield. The sense of peace of knowing your destiny as being secure produces high morale which is necessary for coming to grips with the satanic enemy in the angelic warfare. You fail to understand eternal security of salvation. This, by the way, is one of the reasons the devil promotes the idea that you can lose your salvation. Then he has stripped your feet of the gospel of peace preparation. He has stripped your feet of the motivation to go into the battle.

You do not find people who are fearful of losing their salvation doing very much in the Lord's service. That's just the way it goes. You do not find them engaging in the battle. They've got too many troubles relative to their own soul to be overwhelmingly concerned with the souls of other people, or with their spiritual well-being. Failure to understand the eternal security of salvation by grace will deny you the motivation for fighting without fear of yourself coming under divine wrath. Those who are uncertain of their own eternal destiny just don't have the heart to do battle with Satan for the salvation of others. Peace in the Christian soldier's heart, therefore, produces readiness for him to use his feet and to move out in the conflict.

The gospel of peace shoes does not refer, therefore, again, to personal salvation. It is not personal salvation. You're already saved. We're giving equipment to soldiers who are already enlisted in the Lord's army, and you are called upon to put upon your feet the motivation of a gospel of peace. You already have salvation. Now you need the realization that it's a salvation which is secure. You've got the absolute righteousness, and you can never lose it. Now you will have combat morale capable of entering the conflict.

**Reconciliation**

Actually, the peace of the gospel that we're talking about expresses itself by the doctrine of reconciliation. That's another way of expressing this idea. God Himself has removed the wall of evil that is separating God and man. God has adjusted the lost sinner to compatibility with His divine standard of absolute righteousness. That is what reconciliation is. You look at your watch (which I hope you won't right now) according to some chronology. If you walk by a jewelry store and you look at your watch and say, "Hey, I'm 5 minutes off, and there's a chronometer. I know that's right." Well, then you reconcile your watch with the chronometer, because the chronometer is the standard.

That's what God has done. He is telling us, "You can just rest assured that I have adjusted you with My Holiness. Therefore, I have respected divine integrity. You don't have anything to worry about because I have adjusted you to my integrity on the basis of what I've done apart from anything you do." Now that is the peace of grace salvation. It's not you getting saved. It's you entering into the significance of the salvation that God has provided. The Christian soldier functions on this confident security of having been permanently reconciled then to God's integrity.

**Witnessing**

Part of the Christian soldier's service is, of course, witnessing to this reconciliation which God has provided for all men who will accept it. To do this, you must know the plan of salvation through faith apart from all human doing. That is, salvation is not secured by water baptism; by walking down the aisle; by raising your hand; or, by promising to do better. There is nothing you can do. You just accept what God has provided. That is part of putting on the shoes of the preparation of the peace of salvation. You have to understand that about the gospel.

You also must know that you must depend on the Holy Spirit to use the gospel information to bring conviction and saving faith. Only the Holy Spirit can convict a person. Only the Holy Spirit can give him the faith to believe. Only the Holy Spirit can bring them into the family of God. The thing that the Holy Spirit cannot do is to give them the information on how to be saved: what Christ has done; and, what to believe. That's where you come in. With the confident motivation of the shoes of peace, you can tell a person, "Here is what God has done. You can count on it. You are reconciled," and you can give the witness. Then God the Holy Spirit takes the information.

It is a very serious mistake if you try to interject yourself after the point of giving the information. Many preachers (you can recognize) are guilty of this. They don't know how to shut their mouths after the gospel has been presented. They don't know how to back off after the gospel has really been presented, and just let the Holy Spirit move in now and do His work. They have the arrogance and they have the effrontery to step in there, and they're going to do the Holy Spirit's job. So they do it by gimmicks. That's where you get the raising the hand; coming down the aisle; weeping; kneeling at the altar here at the front for victory; and, all the other gobbledygook stuff that's put out under the guise of entering salvation. That is a satanic delusion, and you must not fall into the mistake in the field of combat, as a Christian soldier, of taking over what God the Holy Spirit alone can do. You give the information, and the Spirit of God takes it from there. So do not resort to these public move gimmicks and appeals to the emotions just because want to secure a decision.

**Doctrines**

Confident witnessing requires a knowledge of doctrine which you will have in the belt of truth in certain areas. I'll just list these for you. Again, we have previously gone into these in greater detail. If you are going to be able to be confident, and that's what these shoes of peace are – motivation, you should be able to have some idea of these critical doctrines as you witness:

1. The doctrine of redemption
2. The doctrine of regeneration
3. The doctrine of positional truth
4. The doctrine of unlimited atonement
5. The doctrine of imputation
6. The doctrine of grace
7. The doctrine of temporal fellowship
8. The doctrine of eternal security
9. The doctrine of the nature of religion
10. (And supremely): The doctrine of God the Holy Spirit.

All of these are fundamental to your being able to witness with confidence, and to be able to answer the questions of fear and confusion that people will often bring to you.

So first of all, today we have looked at the breastplate of righteousness, which is experiential sanctification; right conduct; and, right personal living. Then we've looked at the shoes that are motivation for service. These are the shoes that are the gospel of peace. This is the soul at rest with God such that the wrath of God is no problem. This enables you to then have high morale to enter the battle.

**The Shield of Faith**

Then we come to verse 16, where the Scriptures begin with the words, "Above all," and it means that. It means above all. It means after all of these things, there is one thing that you must not fail to incorporate into your combat equipment. Again, you are responsible for getting there. The pastor-teacher is responsible for giving you the access to the gear, but you're responsible for putting it on. That is called here the shield of faith. The shield of faith is a shield for protection. This is a piece of combat gear which is designed, as you know, for deflecting the blows of an enemy as they come from various quarters. It is the basic and it was the most universal and versatile item of defense in the ancient world. The Christian soldier, again, must have this kind of versatility in combat because it will come from any direction. He must have one piece of equipment so that in any direction he turns, he immediately has something between himself and the enemy. This Paul described as this shield that he is responsible to secure.

This shield, Paul says, represents faith. Faith here is believing the Word of God as the supreme authority in all spiritual matters. Everyone possesses the ability to believe. All of you here have the capacity to believe, but what you believe makes the difference. In the angelic conflict, what you believe makes a very definitely important difference. In salvation, the object of faith is the Lord Jesus Christ. But in spiritual combat, the object is the living and powerful Word of God, the Bible. So that is the issue here. The shield of faith is believing God (believing His Word). And His Word is the Bible. You can see why it is important to realize that the Bible is an inerrant record. It is a record that has no mistakes in it. Its original writings were absolutely free of all errors, because, if it was not free of error, then it would be foolishness for us to be told to have such confidence in the Word of God – such absolute certainty. In the back of your mind, there would always be eating away the uncertainty of whether some point is really true, and whether some point in Scripture that you could cast yourself upon is indeed a false point.

So it is important for us to realize that one of the supreme protections in the angelic conflict against Satan and his demons is faith. Faith in human viewpoint opinions about God and salvation will lead you to injury and destruction in the angelic warfare. This is what most Christians do. Most Christians enter spiritual service with human viewpoint mentalities and with human viewpoint opinions. The result is that they get shot down. You must have faith in what God has provided: from salvation; from godly living; and, all the way down the line to rewards.

I heard a prayer which was expressed by a minister. The end of that prayer had a phrase that went something like this: "And help us to so live that we may in the end enter eternal glory." That is faith in what? That is faith in your human efforts. That is suggesting to people that if they're good, they're going to go to heaven. And that's just the very problem, because the only good you produce is human good, and that's evil. So the more human good you produce, the more evil you have on your record. Isn't that terrible? Faith in human viewpoint opinions is going to destroy you. The faith of the Christian soldier will grow. It can be strengthened. Your shield of faith can be improved through the intake of doctrine into the human spirit. As a matter of fact, there is no limit to how strong a shield you can develop. As the years go by, your shield should get stronger. As the years go by, your shield should become more impregnable to anything that Satan can throw against it. If it does not, then something is wrong with your personal Christian life; with your personal Christian training; or, with your personal response to the training program.

Defeat in the angelic warfare is basically due to the failure to use this shield of faith; that is, believing God. Because what you do then is you do not believe the promises of God, and you do not apply the doctrines of God to your life situations. You're always flying off on a tangent of your own. If you believe the promises of the Word of God, the battle is the Lord's. If you believe the doctrines of the Word of God: "'Leave vengeance to me. I will repay,' says the Lord," and everything else down the line, you'll be on firm ground. If you fail in that, then you have failed in using the shield of faith, and the result will be defeat for you.

One use of the shield of faith is in the exercise of one of those techniques that we actually have already studied: the technique of faith rest. Every time you faith rest something, what you're doing is shoving the shield of faith right up into Satan's nose, and saying, "Here it is, Satan. Hang it on your nose." And the shield of faith rest is what you are putting up there, and that's carrying you through.

**Protection**

Here is the protection that the shield of faith will give you. It enables the Christian soldier to defeat, Paul says, "The flaming arrows of Satan and his demons:" "Above all, taking the shield of faith with which you shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one." This will protect you from all the arrows.

Now flame, in the ancient world, was not produced by explosive means such as we do today. It had to be produced by arrows which were set on fire with an inflammable material (a pitch) which was attached to the arrow. But this was a frightening thing. Immediately it would spread rapidly. So flame was a frightful instrument of battle, and it was a frightening thing for a soldier in battle to be going with the shield, and for the enemy to be resorting to flaming arrows which were being shot at him, because it was not only the fact of hearing them whiz over, but the frightening thing of hearing it thump and hang into the end of your shield. And many times a soldier in battle would panic when a flaming arrow or two stuck in his shield, and his shield was afire, and he would drop it. Of course, that was exactly what the enemy wanted. Then they could move in on him very quickly, and he was destroyed.

So this is one of the things that we're up against. As Christian soldiers, we must understand that God knows what he's talking about, and you don't, and other people don't. God's Word is true and God's word is inerrant, so you don't have to be picky to see which parts you should believe in and which parts you can't. When you realize that Satan is going to throw these kinds of flaming arrows at you, then you are prepared to resist them; to hold a shield up; and, to stand in there firm. Faith in His Word will preclude you from becoming demoralized while under attack.

The flaming arrows take a variety of forms. You should be acquainted with them. Satan will shoot the flaming arrows of human viewpoint about life. We are saturated with that. You cannot read a publication; you can't listen to a television program; you can't turn to advertising; and, you can't turn anywhere without seeing that Satan is shoveling out human viewpoint opinions to you. And immediately you have to be prepared to recognize that arrow.

Another flaming arrow is attack against the inerrancy of the Word of God. Even among Christian circles, we're suffering from believers who are attacking the fact that God's Word is without error. He will shoot the flaming arrow of the appeals to play ball with the world and with carnal Christians. This is a very attractive arrow, especially if you have some nice, attractive carnal Christian friends, or some nice attractive unbeliever friends. They want you to do certain things that are contrary to good Christian testimony; that are contrary to good Christian judgment; and, that are contrary to biblical morality. You play ball a little bit with them. That is a flaming arrow that is easy for us to be hurt with – to play just a little bit of ball instead of standing firm and rejecting all the appeals and the inducements of the world system.

Satan will shoot the arrow of the inducement to you to retire from the stress of battle and get some rest. You may get tired of building washrooms, and painting, and cutting lawns, and fixing things up. Aren't you a little tired? Don't you need a little rest? Many Christians fall into that. I always have to smile when somebody comes along and says, "I'm not going to do this ministry anymore. I think I'll give someone else a chance." That's their cover story for meaning, "I'm retiring because I need a little rest. I've just been hit right between the eyes with one of Satan's flaming arrows, and I'm succumbing to it.

Another arrow that He'll shoot at you is the opportunity for immoral conduct. Satan loves to give you an opening for immoral conduct, especially where you can get away with it, and especially where everyone else is doing it. Therefore, it doesn't really seem all that bad. It's generally tolerated in society. It's almost condoned. Immorality is in exactly that category today. It is tolerated and borderline condoned. Everybody's doing it. That is a terrific arrow that he'll shoot at you – the opportunity for immoral conduct.

He'll shoot at you the arrow of ignoring the four divine institutions which God has provided for the protection of the human race from satanic destruction. Those institutions, of course, are under attack.

He will shoot at you the arrow of false doctrines and of new carnal methods of doing God's work. I've been in the ministry long enough that I really am tired of all the hotshots that come along with a new kind of ministry. We're always getting new ways of doing the Lord's work. We get new ways of moving forward to spiritual mountaintops. In time, they all begin to break apart, and they fall by the wayside. That's a flaming arrow of the devil. God has already given us the method. He's already given us the grace system for learning. He's already given us the local church. He's already given us the means of knowing what He has said, because He has given us the preservation of those Greek and Hebrew languages, and He's given us the technique by which to convey that to the understanding of believers. That's where it's at. There's no new method of doing God's work, and false doctrines, and new illumination.

You have to be careful coming up and saying, "I've just had a great new revelation from God." And somebody is always coming up with it. That's a flaming arrow that the devil is going to shoot you. Wouldn't you like that? I know Charlie Boozer well enough that if he could come up with a new doctrine, he'd be very excited about that. This arrow is so prevalent, and you're always hearing about it: "I have a new view. I have a new insight."

He'll shoot the arrow of the appeals to be an intellectual under the guise of human viewpoint scholarship. Oh, boy, that's a tempting one: "If you believe this, you're one of the smart ones. You'll be an intellectual." Do you know that ignorant intellectualism that we talk about around here? That has such appeal. The devil shoots that at you.

The whole gamut of liberalism in all areas of life is a flaming arrow that the devil shoots at us. Christians are caught up in the flaming arrows of legalisms and taboos for spirituality. You'll never become spiritual through these legalisms and these taboos.

A perverted view of the role of the working of the Holy Spirit, such as you have in the charismatic movement: that's a huge flaming arrow. Many believers have been consumed and have been destroyed by the charismatic movement, and they have lost their rewards because they were caught up with the flaming arrow of a perverted doctrine of the Holy Spirit.

He'll shoot at you the arrow of comparing you as a Christian soldier to others: to their prestige; and, to their success. That's one favorite way that the devil has. He does this to preachers, so preachers keep moving around from one church to another to get more prestige and more success.

He'll shoot the arrow leading you to make a decision on the basis of emotions. That's a very attractive one. You feel so deeply about something, and this is how you make the decision, instead of backing off and saying, "Wait a minute. When I have cooled down, then I'll make a decision."

He'll shoot at you the flaming arrow of money to serve God in Satan's way. There are plenty of Christian groups who have gotten scads of money under the guise of serving God, but they're doing it in the devil's way, and the devil is saying, "Here you are. I'll give you all the money you need as long as you keep doing it my way."

There's the arrow of your financial insecurity. A lot of people are very insecure financially. The Lord says, "I'll never leave you. I'll never forsake you. I take care of the flowers of the field, and you can bet you I'm going to take care of you." But Satan will shoot that flaming air of insecurity financially to cause us to go astray.

He'll shoot the arrow about the idea of our not always being tied down with Christian activities so we can live a little.

He'll shoot the arrow to reject lines of authority so that you can be free to do your own thing. Have you ever been hit with that arrow? You better teach your children that lines of authority and constituted authority are of God. If you don't teach your children that lines of authority are of God, they will violate what our Constitution sought to preserve: personal property. People who shoplift are those who are guilty of breaking down in lines of authority. The devil has shot the flaming arrow that, "You don't always have to ask and be told what you do. You don't always have to get the permission. Be able to be free to do your own thing." The devil will shoot you down for it, and he will shoot your children down with you in the process.

The devil will also shoot to you the flaming arrow of the question of: Who knows what the Bible really teaches? Everyone has a different opinion, so who knows what the Bible teaches? And about the time you come through and say, "Thus says the Lord," somebody says, "Oh, don't tell me that. You know, this guy says this is what the Lord says. How do you know what He says?" Don't ever back down. You shove that shield of faith right up and say, "Because God has said it, and I believe it. You will not dissuade me with your questioning like you did to Eve, 'Yea, hath God said?'"

Dr. John E. Danish, 1977

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