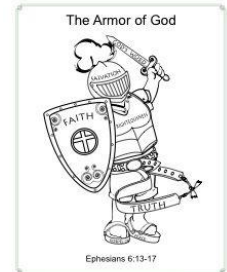


# **THE CHURCH**

## **7. The Church Is Like An Army**



### **Introduction**

Most countries in the world have an army. Have you ever wondered why? Perhaps one reason is to keep control within their own country, but the main reason is usually to be prepared for any attack from an enemy. Some countries use their armies to take possession of new territories. God also has an army! This is the last picture of the church we are going to look at: the church is like an army, and the Commander or Captain of this army is Jesus.

### **Scripture Reading: Ephesians 6:10-17**

#### **A. JESUS, THE COMMANDER OF THE ARMY**

The first time we read about the Commander of the Lord's Army is in the book of Joshua. The Children of Israel had spent 40 years in the wilderness, and were about to enter the Promised Land. Moses had died, and now Joshua was the leader. One day as he was standing near Jericho, he had an amazing experience! He met the Commander of the Lord's Army and Joshua's response was to fall to the ground and worship him. See Joshua 5:13-15. Who was this person?

Joshua was told to take off his shoes, as he was standing on holy ground. This is what happened when Moses met the Lord at the burning bush. No man or angel would have accepted Joshua's worship. This man was none other than the Lord Jesus. We see in the book of Revelation that Jesus is the one who leads the army of God. Revelation 19:11-16.

Joshua was a type of the Lord Jesus. The name Joshua means 'Jesus saves'. Joshua was called to lead the Children of Israel into the land that God had promised them as their inheritance. Jesus has won the victory over the enemy, and now wants to claim the inheritance he has already purchased with his blood for us. Not only does he want us to stand against the enemy in our own lives, so that we can walk in victory, but also that we as the church stand against the powers of darkness and bring men and women into the Kingdom of God.

#### **B. THE CHURCH AS SOLDIERS IN THE ARMY**

In many parts of the world wars or battles are taking place. Countries train soldiers and prepare military equipment to be prepared for any conflict that takes place. We too need to be trained as soldiers and learn how to protect ourselves with the armour God has provided. Look at Ephesians 6:12-13. It is important we understand that we are not fighting against people, but against the evil powers that live in the spiritual world. These evil powers are under Satan's command, and are controlling men and women's lives, so they cannot know Jesus. We have been given power to tear down these evil forces. These weapons are not worldly, but spiritual, and powerful against the enemy. 2 Corinthians 10:3-5.

Here are some of these weapons: the name of Jesus, praise, speaking in tongues, prayer and the blood of Jesus. Let's begin by using these weapons in our own life, to overcome fear, discouragement, doubt or sickness. When we are able to overcome the enemy in our own lives, we will be better equipped to be used in God's army!

Remember, God has given us armour to protect us. This armour is not made of iron, but is spiritual and comes from our relationship with Jesus. What are the pieces of armour listed in Ephesians 6:14-17?

There are two qualities that we need to be good soldiers in the army of Jesus Christ and they are mentioned by Paul in 2 Timothy 2:3-4.

### **A. Total Commitment**

The first quality is that a good soldier wants to please his commanding officer, and is totally committed to him and his mission. The same is true if we are going to be good soldiers of Jesus Christ. We need to be completely committed to him. No Commanding Officer wants a soldier who flights on one side one day, and then goes over to help the enemy on another day! Jesus cannot use people like that either! Let's be one hundred percent committed to him.

### **B. Willing to Endure**

Soldiers often endure great hardship and suffering. Following Jesus is not always easy, and we too need to have this quality of endurance, so that we do not give up, even when there are attacks, discouragement or difficulties. God may allow us to face these things, so this quality will develop in our lives.

## **Conclusion**

We are living in the last days, and the return of Jesus is imminent. Jesus is not going to return for a broken, defeated church, but a church that knows how to overcome the enemy and do battle. He is wanting to prepare us now. In the days to come he is going to lead his people, who are prepared, into the final battle against Satan. We see this in Revelation 19:11-16. Will you be one of those dressed in white and riding in his army?

Let's learn how to use the weapons God has given us to overcome the enemy in our own lives, and develop the qualities of a good soldier. Why not join other soldiers in this battle, by taking part in a prayer group or your church prayer meeting? Together we will see the powers of darkness pulled down over the lives of the people in our town or city, and open the way for them to come to know the Saviour. What an honour to serve as a soldier in God's army, under our Commanding Officer, the Lord Jesus Christ!