

## The Foundation of Our Daily Victory

*“And they (we) overcame him (Satan) by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their (our) testimony; and they (we) loved not their lives unto the death.” (Rev 12:11, KJV)*

### The Way It Is

What is the front-page headline in the news in the other side of eternity? It is found in Revelation 12:10-11 and it states unequivocally “the righteous win!” Did you hear those words? The righteous side wins! In Gainesville, we are all excited about the Gator Basketball Team winning the SEC. It feels so good to be on the winning side, doesn’t it. Americans do not like to lose. I am so glad that Messiah’s Body wins, aren’t you? How would you like to know with 100% certainty that your team will win the NCAA Basketball Tournament? Yet, this is precisely what Scripture tells us about the future war against HaSatan—we win! How sweet it is!

Some of you were given a bag full of stones when you were taught in our previous congregation (your former walk with the L-rd) that the Believer’s life was to be devoid of struggles. Nothing could be further from the truth! In fact, if you are not struggling, then you are probably not causing any damage to Satan’s kingdom. Anyone doing something for the L-rd is going to meet strong opposition from the kingdom of darkness. Scripture affirms this warfare mindset when Rabbi *Sha’ul* states in Ephesians 6:12:

*<sup>12</sup>For we are not **struggling** against human beings, but against the rulers, authorities and cosmic powers governing this darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realm. (CJB, emphasis, mine)*

I do not know about you, but I am definitely in a struggle. Sometimes we win, sometimes the enemy wins, but in the struggle against HaSatan we know the final result—we are victorious, our side wins! In order to receive the crown we have to wrestle. And in order to wrestle well we must have a warfare mentality—one moment we are up, and in other moments we are down, sometimes we are ahead, sometimes we are behind, sometimes we win a scrimmage and sometimes we lose a battle—but ultimately we win the war. Scripture comforts us while in these battles:

*“We have all kinds of troubles, but we are not crushed; we are perplexed, yet not in despair; persecuted, yet not abandoned; knocked down, yet not destroyed.” (2 Corinthians 4:8-9)*

*“I can do all things through him (Messiah) who gives me power.” (Phil. 4:13)*

*“No, in all these things we are SUPERCONQUERORS, through the one who has loved us.” (Romans 8:37)*

*“But he told me, “My grace is enough for you, for my power is brought to perfection in weakness. Therefore, I am very happy to boast about my weaknesses, in order that Messiah’s power will rest upon me.” (2 Cor. 12:9)*

Our first point is to understand and accept the fact that the Believer’s Walk is a struggle—a spiritual battle—not really against a system or against men but against the one who is behind the system, the ancient enemy of G-d, HaSatan the ruler of darkness. *Yeshua* said: *“The thief comes only in order to steal, kill and destroy; I have come so that they may have life, life in its fullest measure.” (John 10:10)*

But if normal state of affairs is a state of war, then we Believers are nothing less than an army—the Army of G-d. There are only three statuses for members of the armed forces of *Adonai Tzevaot* (the L-rd of Hosts/Armies): (1) a frontline soldier (a Marine or a Green Beret?), (2) a POW or (3) or a deserter. These are ultimately, the only positions one can be in the *Army of Adonai*. Rank does not matter—in fact greatness is measured by servanthood (cf. Mark 9:35 and 10:44).

Many segments of the Redeemed Community are POWs and churches are often no more than collections of glorified POW camps whose people are holding on until the Commander comes back to rescue them. They hope and wait to see what will happen, without joy, without victory. People dead on the inside and broken hearted saying: “*Messiah will come and will fix things up.*” Victimized by circumstances and lacking in trust, we see people who are enslaved and imprisoned by their own lusts, sin, and fears. They just wait and often despair—when will I get out of this situation? In fact, a theology has been developed to explain this conquered state of affairs and justify the status quo: “*Glory to G-d, we are few and fewer and we are down because the L-rd is purifying His flock.*” BUNK! LIES! General Patton told his army: “*I am sure that some stupid politician in Washington told you that the secret of winning the war is to die for our country. But I tell you that the secret to winning this war is to cause the enemy to die for his country!*”

Yes, there are times that the enemy has us pinned down and we must lose gracefully, but if we are to be an overcomer, we must win—with grace, with holiness, with transparency, with humility—but win we must. One more time, personalized:

*“I Rabbi Tony (your name) have overcome HaSatan by (1) the blood of the Lamb, and (2) by the word of my testimony (about the Blood); and (3) because I have loved not my live unto the death.”*

### **Spiritual Warfare—a New Fashion or the Latest Fad?**

Do we find evidence of this struggle ten, one hundred or even thousand of years ago? Recall the events surrounding the birth of our Messiah. Was there a fight for His life two thousand years ago? You bet. Had not the angel told *Yosef* to take the child *Yeshua* to Egypt, King Herod (controlled by HaSatan) would have had Him killed. (*Egypt?* This is the last place you would expect the Jewish Messiah to be taken to! And then when it was time to return to Israel, the angel said to take Him to *Nazareth*. ‘*Can anything good come out of Nazareth?*’)

What about the Hebrew Scriptures, do we see evidence of spiritual warfare there? In *Bereshit* (Genesis) 3:1 we see it all starting to unfold when Satan spoke to *Chava* and said: “*...Did God really say, ‘You are not to eat from any tree in the garden?’*” In fact, the entire Book of *Iov* (Job) is completely dedicated to the struggle between G-d and HaSatan as played out in the field of the soul of man. This war between good and evil has as its prize the souls of men.

What about *Yeshua*’s public ministry? It began with a *mikvah* and a statement by the Father: “*This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.*” (Matt. 3:17) Unlike every other person that was ever immersed by *Yochanan*—dry sinner in, wet sinner out—this relative (cousin) of *Yochanan* was VERY different—He was sinless. Now the Father Himself throws His hat into the ring and tells HaSatan, in the hearing of all those present: “*make my day.*” From this point on nearly 40% of the verses in Matthew, Mark, Luke and John deal with spiritual warfare! Nearly half of the Gospels deal with spiritual warfare. Do you suppose Spiritual Warfare is important in our lives?

The answer is therefore: NO, spiritual warfare is not a new fashion or a new fad but the NORMAL STATE OF AFFAIRS IN THE BODY OF MESSIAH.

### **The Moment of Victory**

I have also shared with you on numerous occasions in the last 15 years what took place at the execution stake of Messiah. Something happened at the moment of Messiah *Yeshua*’s death, at the moment of His apparent defeat, that his enemies represented by the centurion and the crowd left beating their breasts and

declaring that He was righteous and divine but His friends that had been with Him in all of His public ministry returned discouraged, defeated and went and hid behind closed doors. You see, something took place in *Gulgolta* (which means "place of a skull," see Matt. 27:33b), where *Yeshua* and HaSatan fought to the end. Whenever we understand what took place in this crucial moment we will become equipped with the greatest weapon in spiritual warfare against principalities and powers that control the forces of darkness in this world and in our lives. And what is this weapon? The Blood of the Lamb!

*It was now about noon, and darkness covered the whole Land until three o'clock in the afternoon; the sun did not shine. Also the parokhet in the Temple was split down the middle. Crying out with a loud voice, Yeshua said, "Father! Into your hands I commit my spirit." With these words he gave up his spirit. When the Roman officer saw what had happened, he began to praise God and said, "Surely this man was innocent!" And when all the crowds that had gathered to watch the spectacle saw the things that had occurred, they returned home beating their breasts. All his friends, including the women who had accompanied him from the Galil, had been standing at a distance; they saw it all. (Luke 23:44-49)*

To summarize, all of the forces of the evil one gathered at *Gulgolta* (Golgotha) to witness HaSatan's triumph ("The fifth angel sounded his shofar; and I saw a star that had fallen out of heaven onto the earth, and he gave the key to the shaft leading down to the Abyss. He opened the shaft of the Abyss, and there went up smoke from the shaft like the smoke of a huge furnace; the sun was darkened, and the sky too, by the smoke from the shaft. Then out of the smoke onto the earth came locusts, and they were given power like the power scorpions have on earth." Rev. 9:1-3). But Col. 2:14-15 tell us that what really happened is that Messiah made a "public spectacle" of them ("...Stripping the rulers and authorities of their power, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by means of the stake" see Col. 2:14-15). *Yeshua* stripped the power from HaSatan and his army. The centurion and the crowd saw this happen and concluded "*Messiah is Just!*" His friends did not see this and left instead defeated and fearful.

This event fulfills the prophecy of John 8:28: "So *Yeshua* said, "When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am who I say I am, and that of myself I do nothing, but say only what the Father has taught me." Indeed, when He was crucified, at the moment of His death, He triumphed over evil once and for all time. You and I realize this and proclaim Him as the divine Son of G-d. However, notice that *Yeshua* said in John 8:28 that those present (even those responsible for His death) will "*KNOW THAT I AM WHO I SAY I AM.*"

I will not belabor the point today. Scripture states unequivocally that *Yeshua*: "...wiped away the bill of charges against us. Because of the regulations, it stood as a testimony against us; but he removed it by nailing it to the execution-stake" (see Col. 2:14). Therefore, "What shall we then say to these things? If G-d be for us, who can be against us?" (Ro. 8:31, KJV)

Many people preach that when *Yeshua* died HaSatan celebrated his victory for three days and three nights until the Resurrection on the first day of the week. They celebrate, therefore, the triumph of the L-rd at "Resurrection Sunday." But note that Scripture definitively tell us that:

***Yeshua triumphed at the execution stake!***

### ***The Number One Strategy in Spiritual Warfare - The Power of G-d and the Wisdom of G-d***

On April 28, 2000 I preached a message entitled "G-d's power and G-d's wisdom!" The title is based on 1 Corinthians 1:17-25:

*"<sup>17</sup>For the Messiah did not send me to immerse but to proclaim the Good News—and to do it without relying on "wisdom" that consists of mere rhetoric, so as not to rob the Messiah's execution-stake of its power. <sup>18</sup>For the message about the execution-stake is nonsense to those in the process of being destroyed, but to us in the process*

*of being saved it is the power of G-d. <sup>19</sup> Indeed, the Tanakh says, “I will destroy the wisdom of the wise and frustrate the intelligence of the intelligent.” <sup>20</sup> Where does that leave the philosopher, the Torah-teacher, or any of today’s thinkers? Hasn’t G-d made this world’s wisdom look pretty foolish? <sup>21</sup> For G-d’s wisdom ordained that the world, using its own wisdom, would not come to know him. Therefore G-d decided to use the “nonsense” of what we proclaim as his means of saving those who come to trust in it. <sup>22</sup> Precisely because Jews ask for signs and Greeks try to find wisdom, <sup>23</sup> we go on proclaiming a Messiah executed on a stake as a criminal! To Jews this is an obstacle, and to Greeks it is nonsense; <sup>24</sup> but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, this same Messiah is G-d’s power and G-d’s wisdom! <sup>25</sup> For G-d’s “nonsense” is wiser than humanity’s “wisdom”.*

The order of the details in Scripture is as inspired as the Scripture itself. Power comes first, wisdom comes second. If we turn it around, we will not get the results of the “*power of the execution-stake*.” The basis of daily victory is the Atonement of Messiah, that is, the Blood of *Yeshua*! This is the basis of Rabbi *Sha’ul*’s preaching. This is the secret of the early Messianic Communities.

STRATEGY: This is the principal point in spiritual warfare: When we preach about the spilt Blood of *Yeshua*, our testimony has to reflect what took place in Calvary—*Yeshua* stripped HaSatan of his power, made a public spectacle of him and the forces of evil and nailed the bill of charges against us to the execution-stake. We must do what Rabbi *Sha’ul* did: preach Messiah and Him crucified, not only to people, but also to the principalities and powers.

This is not the way many of us we were taught in Christianity! No wonder we do not get the results we want! We are used to testifying about the Life in Messiah, but we get poor results with this strategy. We preach about this life to the POW camps of Believers, to those behind barbed wire fence camps which are enslaved by the enemy’s forces. But they are captives inside the fence and blind! The Bible says that the G-d of this world blinds them (see 2 Cor. 4:4). But what we have to do is to bind the strong man, to place the guards under the authority of Messiah in order that the captives can escape and run to their freedom! You see, HaSatan is a liar and a deceiver. Scripture tells us that *Yeshua* already paid the price for every person in this planet (not only for their lives but also for their health and infirmities). The Promised Land is no longer in the hands of the bank or the mortgage company, the title is in the Believers (and therefore our) hands.

The problem is that there are squatters in our inherited property, and they do not want to leave. We read them the “*decrees*” but they do not make a move, they are not gentlemen. What we have to do is serve them with an expulsion notice. We have authority from the Father’s Supreme Court to drive them out and it reads clearly: “Out!”

Scripture teaches us: “*My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge...*” (See Hosea 4:6). This is exactly the same strategy used by Pharaoh in *Mitzraim*:

*“Now there arose a new king over Egypt. He knew nothing about Yosef but said to his people, “Look, the descendants of Isra’el have become a people too numerous and powerful for us. Come, let’s use wisdom in dealing with them. Otherwise, they’ll continue to multiply; and in the event of war they might ally themselves with our enemies, fight against us and leave the land altogether.” (Exodus 1:8-10)*

The reality was that the people of G-d were more and mightier than the forces of Pharaoh, yet they ended up enslaved by the weaker and smaller force. When will we learn? Our Jewish people already went through this ordeal! Must we? Also recall that Pharaoh did not heed to The Eternal’s voice—no, not even after nine plagues. It took Passover to free our people—it took Messiah’s Passover to free us! And we are free from the bondage of sin and death. But Pharaoh does not give up easily, does he?

Preach Messiah and Him crucified to the principalities and powers first, and then preach to the people and we will see them run to the altar, unimpeded by the forces of evil.

What we have done is to preach the wisdom of G-d before preaching the power of G-d, and by changing the sequence, we get nothing (or very little). We teach people about *Yeshua* and then try to get His power and it takes a LONG TIME. In fact, this is why people in the churches do not tithe, and instead steal, lie, look at pornography in magazines, TV, movies, etc. They tell us, "*brother, we are saved and baptized and we are working out our salvation.*" Yet in Argentina, Uruguay, Mexico, Venezuela, Puerto Rico and Colombia and in countless other places (notably, many outside the US) homosexuals change instantly, alcoholics are delivered, chain smokers quit immediately, drug addicts are delivered from cocaine, heroin, etc. When you ask them "*what happened to you?*" they reply: "*I do not know, one moment I was dead but now I live. One moment I was blind, but now I see!*" We act like the Pharisees: "*Now here, let me see your credentials...*" But the blind man says: "*Glory to G-d I was blind but now I see. I cannot explain what happened, but I have the proof—I can see!*"

We are here to serve an expulsion notice to HaSatan and his hosts; we have come to cleanse His Congregation. You see, power is not understood, power is experienced. You do not have to have a PhD in nuclear physics to understand a nuclear bomb, just throw it and you will see, even if you do not even understand what a neutron is! The Power of G-d operates in order to cause the Wisdom of G-d to take root.

### **Ready, Aim, Fire**

If your adversary carries a driver license or wears clothes, then this is not your enemy! If you shoot them, you will be wounding the wrong forces! Our enemy is not ultimately people; it is HaSatan and his demons. We are soldiers. We get shot at, we get wounded, and we are taken out of the battle. But praise G-d we are knocked down but we are not destroyed ("*...persecuted, yet not abandoned; knocked down, yet not destroyed.*" See 2 Cor. 4:9). We must therefore take aim and the proper target, and the target is not people. The target is HaSatan, the ancient enemy of G-d and the people of G-d.

Before the gladiator could decapitate his defeated foe he had to ask permission. HaSatan also has to ask permission. G-d has already said NO! We need the mindset of a soldier, not a POW. POWs cannot free POWs, only soldiers can free POWs. You see, all we need to do is to say to the enemy: "*My commander in chief has defeated your commander in chief, I am in charge here, by the authority of my commander in chief BE GONE!*"

There is no time for apathy in our midst. It is time to apply the mindset of a soldier to all our lives. We are not deserters. Our only choice is to be marines or POWs. Tell the squatters to get out of your life, your wife, your husband, your children, your business, your finances, your daily routine.

Make a list of those family members that are in POW camps. Pray for them daily. Proclaim the testimony of Messiah *Yeshua* on their behalf. Serve notice to the guards, HaSatan has no rights, proclaim your authority in Messiah, tell them you have the "*Decree of Expulsion*" and serve it to them, in prayer, with confidence, trusting (with faith), but serve it.