

# *Perspective*

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## **Our Spiritual Warfare**

William Mumford was a native of North Carolina but lived in New Orleans. He was guilty of tearing down the U.S. flag raised over Confederate New Orleans after the city was captured by Union troops during the American Civil War. Imagine that, he was executed for treason for tearing down a flag. It is not uncommon these days to see people burn and desecrate the flag. Mumford was the last person executed for treason in the U.S. No one since that time has ever been executed for federal treason. The Constitution defines the crime so narrowly that a prosecution is extremely remote. In U.S. politics, as well as other Western nations, it is often difficult to distinguish whether a politician is for or against their own country. They say they love their country and they are for the working people of the nation, but their actions reflect the opposite. Some openly speak as though they hate their country as they grow richer in their political office. They practice graft and even in some cases work surreptitiously with the enemy to bring down their own country. Some might call it treason, but where are the prosecutors?

## **When did the war begin and end?**

The serpent's (metaphorical) offspring are demonic forces and also those people who follow the devil to accomplish his will. Jesus called the Pharisees a "brood of vipers" in Matthew 12:34, and He said they were of their "*father, the devil*" in John 8:44. In short, God says Satan's seed would be the enemy of the coming Messiah. Genesis 3:15, "*And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel.*" The *Darby Translation* translates "bruise your head" as "crush thy head."

Notice, "*her Seed*" in this verse. The word "Seed" is capitalized, meaning it is referring to the coming Messiah who was the Son of God. Jesus was the Christ who battled the Devil and struck a crushing blow to his head and disqualified him from being the god of this world (Matthew 4:1-11, 2 Corinthians 4:3-4, Revelation 12:9). In regard to verse 15 concerning the *head* and *heel*, The *Companion Bible* states: "They denote the temporary sufferings of the Seed, and the complete destruction of Satan and his works (Heb\_2:14. 1Jn\_3:8). Heel = lower part. Head = vital part. This is the first great promise and prophecy." Jesus' heel was bruised and would heal, but Satan's head was crushed, meaning he would be put out of commission altogether.

## **The weapons of our warfare**

The Bible compares the saints to a well-trained and disciplined soldier. The apostle Paul wrote Timothy, "*You therefore must endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No one engaged in warfare entangles himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please him who enlisted him as a soldier.*" (2 Timothy 2:3-4)

The church is involved in a spiritual war, Ephesians 6:10-12: "*Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.*"

II Corinthians 10:3-6 further explains the fight of the saints of the church: "*For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ, and being ready to punish all disobedience when your obedience is fulfilled.*"

## **Does spiritual espionage and sabotage happen?**

Israel caught two Air Force technicians from Tel Nof Airbase, near Ashdod, who will be charged with spying for Iran during Operation Roaring Lion. One may be charged with treason. In nearly every war there are spies who practice espionage. Spies are used to obtain information about war plans and activities,

especially of an enemy, to gain advantage. Sometimes sabotage is employed. This is deliberately destroying, damaging, or obstructing (something), especially for political or military advantage.

We don't often think about how cunning the serpent the Devil is in employing these same tactics in the spiritual sense. Satan is a master at thwarting the plans of God by these means, but in the grand plans of God, he will never win. The serpent sabotaged God's plans in the Garden of Eden by deceiving Eve and causing Adam to reject God.

Satan's minions, spiritual and physical, are always lurking around the people of God seeking to deceive and mislead where possible. II Peter 2:1-2 warns there would be saboteurs who rise up in the church for the purpose of deceiving: *"But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them...And many will follow their destructive ways, because of whom the way of truth will be blasphemed..."*

The apostle Peter further describes these foul deceivers in verse 12-14: *"But these, like natural brute beasts made to be caught and destroyed, speak evil of the things they do not understand, and will utterly perish in their own corruption, and will receive the wages of unrighteousness, as those who count it pleasure to carouse in the daytime. They are spots and blemishes, carousing in their own deceptions while they feast with you, having eyes full of adultery and that cannot cease from sin, enticing unstable souls. They have a heart trained in covetous practices, and are accursed children."*

Of course, it is important we are not paranoid in thinking all are bent on destroying God's work. It is vital for each of us to be well established in the truth with the right spirit and attitude. The apostle Paul wrote: *"...I write so that you may know how you ought to conduct yourself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth."* (1 Timothy 2:15)

### **How do we avoid the spiritual saboteurs?**

In the end of the age the agents of the Devil will increase and not decrease. Paul warned the young evangelist Timothy: *"But evil men and impostors will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived. But you must continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned them, and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus."* (II Timothy 13-15)

The Proverbs admonish us, "drink water out of your own cistern...and your own well." The reason, so you know it is safe to drink and not contaminated by impurities or even something poisonous (Proverbs 5:15). Solomon is giving those who would be wise a metaphor meaning be careful to whom you listen. Certainly, never follow someone who speaks contrary to what the church teaches. II Timothy 4:3-4 warns: *"For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables."*

Also of vital importance, know the truth taught by God's church. The Bible makes it abundantly clear how you protect yourself. John the apostle stressed this with the church in II John 10-11: *"If anyone comes to you and does not bring this doctrine, do not receive him into your house nor greet him; for he who greets him shares in his evil deeds."*

We would like all to repent and be in the first resurrection, but that is not always possible. Sometimes there are those who are of a contrarian spirit and they will not change. Never latch on to such people or you could become spiritually shipwrecked with them. The apostle Paul instructed the young pastor Titus: *"Reject a divisive man after the first and second admonition, knowing that such a person is warped and sinning, being self-condemned."* (Titus 3:10-11)

The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but always spiritual. Jesus told the woman at the well, *"But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth."* (John 4:23-24).

The message from God's word: Know the truth. Humbly execute spiritual warfare in spirit and truth.