

A Tactic of Satan – Stealing Time

As I have worked and studied over the last 19 years as a child of God, that is, as one who has believed in Jesus Christ, I have come to realize a few things about how Satan works. Some of the things I realized were monumental in their implications. Others, not so much. But, all are significant in that Satan uses them to ensnare men in such ways as to keep man from ever coming to the truth.

The evidence of Satan's strategy is contained in the point the Lord Jesus Christ made about the wide gate and broad way versus the strait gate and narrow way:

Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide *is* the gate, and broad *is* the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait *is* the gate, and narrow *is* the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it. (*Matthew 7:13-14*)

Moreover, if someone does come to the truth and believes the Gospel, then Satan has a set of tactics to render them impotent for spreading the truth they have found. Since Satan is the father of lies and a deceiver, the tactics he has are almost endless. It really doesn't matter to him if one tactic seems to conflict with another tactic he uses (or even if it actually does conflict), because the point of his working is to keep man from the truth. In this, we must ever remember that Satan hates man, because man is made in the image of the LORD God, and Satan hates the LORD God. Hence, we must remember that Satan is continually trying to overthrow the LORD God.

Yes, Satan was cast out from being one of the covering cherubs beside the throne of God. Yes, we can be assured that Satan

knows he cannot overthrow the LORD by force:

And the seventy returned again with joy, saying, **Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name.** And he said unto them, **I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven.** (Luke 10:17-18)

However, if he can prove the LORD God unrighteous...

Thus, he tries that very strategy – to prove the LORD God unrighteous. All he has to do is succeed once, and he has won. Nevertheless, we can rest assured: He won't win. He can't, because he cannot really understand what it means to be omniscient and to love equity. The LORD God LOVES equity and is omniscient. Hence, the LORD God is, and will remain righteous. ((Loving equity is loving righteousness, as righteousness is defined in Scripture as being '*equal in all your ways.*' For an understanding of that, you are encouraged to read [Appendix A: Righteousness](#), which discusses righteousness and what it is by the definition of Scripture.))

Nevertheless, Satan works to win. His greatest effort is on this earth, among men. At once and the same time, Satan wants man to worship him (being narcissistic he really wants man to worship him), but he hates man and wants to utterly destroy him because man is made in the image of God. These are two entirely contradictory goals.

As an aside, did you ever notice that tyrants and dictators behave exactly the same way as Satan? They to want the worship of those under them, but they also destroy those under them in a totally arbitrary fashion. In a tyranny and dictatorship, no one is safe. Someone may be the favorite of the tyrant one day, and be killed the next for little to no reason.

So it is with Satan.

Nevertheless, Satan obviously believes that the more men he can get to "turn away" from the truth, the stronger his case

against the LORD. Hence, he has several tactics that he uses in his strategy against the LORD. All are directed at man:

1. *False religion*
2. *Focus on knowledge*
3. *Focus on self*
4. *Focus on a "significant other"*
5. *Focus on things*
6. *Stealing time*

Now, we should understand that all the above fall under the auspices of the three things set forth in I John, chapter 2:

Love not the world, neither the things *that are* in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. **For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life,** is not of the Father, but is of the world. (*I John 2:15-16*)

And Satan, by right of conquest:

And I saw, and behold a white horse: and **he that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given unto him: and he went forth conquering, and to conquer.** And when he had opened the second seal, I heard the second beast say, Come and see. And there went out another horse *that was* red: and **power was given to him that sat thereon to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another:** and there was given unto him a great sword. And when he had opened the third seal, I heard the third beast say, Come and see. And I beheld, and lo a black horse; and he that sat on him had a pair of balances in his hand. And I heard a voice in the midst of the four beasts say, A measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny; and see thou hurt not the oil and the wine. And when he had opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth beast say, Come and see. And I looked, and behold a pale horse: and his name that sat on him was Death,

and Hell followed with him. And power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth. (*Revelation 6:2-8*)

Is therefore the god of this world:

But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: In whom **the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not**, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them. (*II Corinthians 4:3-4*)

We must remember that Satan doesn't care what you do, so long as you never come to the truth. The reason this works as a strategy is because the default end of man is destruction in Hell, and we have only our time on earth to come to the truth:

And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: ... (*Hebrews 9:27*)

Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, *even* by him doth this man stand here before you whole. This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. **Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.** (*Acts 4:10-12*)

Because every single person on earth requires salvation and justification before God, there is a built in advantage for Satan in his efforts to destroy the LORD God by man:

Each and every person on earth has a limited time to come to the truth and be justified before God by the work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Yes we, each and every one, only have X amount of time. Our

time is limited – and Satan knows that all too well.

Thus, Satan sets about to steal your time and mine – and he uses everything in the world to do it.

You see, we cannot recover our time. Once it is gone, it is gone – for good. This makes what we choose to spend our time on, exceedingly important. If Satan can get us bound up in dealing with this thing, and then with that thing, then we will never spend the time necessary to come to the knowledge of the truth.

We will never take the time to really try to understand what the LORD God is asking of us and requiring of us. We must understand that the LORD requires that we love the truth, and that we are willing to sacrifice for the truth. That is one of the points raised in Hebrews 11:6:

But without faith *it is impossible to please him*: for he that cometh to God must believe *that he is, and that **he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.*** (Hebrews 11:6)

This takes time. Satan knows this. Therefore, if he can, Satan will get the unbeliever wrapped up in everything in the world so that they have no time at all to learn anything about the LORD God and the salvation offered through the Lord Jesus Christ. After all, Satan doesn't care what you believe, so long as you never come to the truth.

For the believer, Satan wishes to get them tied up in everyday, mundane, but oh so necessary things, so that they never bear the fruit the LORD is desiring of them. They don't learn beyond salvation. They can't witness and tell others. They can't explain salvation, because they don't know it well enough to do so. This is the point the Lord Jesus Christ made to Martha when she fussed about her sister Mary:

Now it came to pass, as they went, that he entered into a certain village: and a certain woman named Martha received him

into her house. And she had a sister called Mary, which also sat at Jesus' feet, and heard his word. **But Martha was cumbered about much serving, and came to him, and said, Lord, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? bid her therefore that she help me. And Jesus answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things: But one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her.**
(Luke 10:38-42)

Martha was letting her time be stolen from her. Here she had a once in a lifetime (indeed, once in all history) opportunity to be taught directly by the LORD Himself – and she was stuck on the mundane, everyday things. She was throwing away a golden opportunity.

Why?

Because the earthly ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ was only three (3) years. That is all. If she throws it away because she is hung up on being a good hostess... what shall we say to that?

REALLY? Yes, really. It really was more important to Martha to be a good hostess, than to sit and learn at the feet of the LORD.

Nevermind she has the rest of her life to be a good hostess to everyone that enters her house. She could drop it just this once for the wonderful opportunity to be taught by the LORD Himself.

But because she is just like the rest of us, she only sees the necessity of the duties of this life, and misses the necessity of the duties of eternal life. She is letting her precious time be stolen from her because her focus is entirely wrong.

Thus, Satan is successful. Why? Because it never appears that his hand is in it. Because it appears as a necessity of life

and the culture we live in. It certainly was for Martha. Culturally, she could not forsake being a good hostess. That would be bad form. What would people say? Oh, can't have it that people are whispering that Martha was a bad host when Jesus came to her house.

So she had to do it – and miss the teaching at the feet of the LORD Himself. You know, it strikes me that the Lord Jesus didn't care. He would rather have her being taught too. She can be a good hostess at some other time. Not being a good hostess just this once is not going to kill her, or her reputation.

Nevertheless, we think just like Martha. We have things in this life that *"have to be done"* and they cannot be shirked.

You know, if you face eternity tomorrow, it won't make one whit's worth of difference for this world – and Satan will have succeeded. But it will make every difference in eternity for you.

Don't allow Satan and the system he has set up in this world, to steal your time.

What Kind of War

An Outline on Spiritual Warfare



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NOTE: This is an outline of a study. It is not intended to guide the reader “every step of the way” so to speak. Rather, it is deliberately done this way to allow the individual “leeway” to perceive what the LORD is showing them in the study. If this study were much more detailed it would leave little to no room for the LORD to work as the reader’s mind would be led to believe that everything is adequately covered and the major lessons thoroughly covered, and thus go no further. By leaving it “open” the reader must go to the LORD and ask what is intended.

The structure of the lesson is to make a point, give the verses which apply, then make brief commentary concerning the most significant aspect(s) of the point. This leaves the one doing the study considerable room to adapt the study to their needs.

– *I pray it is profitable for you.* –

In Christ,

Paul W. Davis

Do the names: Sendero Luminoso; Polisario; M19; FMLN; Basque Separatist; UNITA; Mau Mau; Irish Republican Army; Red Army Faction; Che Guevara; Front Sandinista Liberation National; Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), mean anything to you? And what do they have to do with us?

How many of you got up this morning and set your mind that you were at war?

- The wars of this world are a reflection of the spiritual war that is on-going.
- Of all types of warfare, the spiritual war we fight most resembles Guerrilla Warfare.

The Guerrilla war is fought from a “Total War” concept. (By the way, Sept. 11th was simply a guerrilla attack by a far flung, guerrilla organization fighting a war based upon a religious view.)

- There is no “Front line.”
- One can never really be sure of who is assisting the enemy at any given time.
- You may even find yourself assisting the enemy in your own/or a friend’s destruction
- Constant vigilance is required – one must have a warfare mindset.
- One is subject to attack at any time. There are no “sacred” days.
- There are no immune, or off-limits targets.
- One cannot “opt out” of a Guerilla War. The enemy will not allow it.
- No one in a Guerilla war is neutral.
- Critical victories and defeats are not easily discernable.
- One can find that they have lost long after the particular battle that precipitated the defeat.
- No matter how many “victories” one has, defeat is always a mere battle away – due to the targets involved.
- Our war is not about defeating Satan. (Hebrews 2:14-15)
The Lord Jesus Christ already did that.

Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. (*Hebrews 2:14-15*)

- Our war is about being effective witnesses.
- As in any war, accurate, timely information acted upon continuously is the key to success.

Opposition tactics in this war.

1. The magnification of the faults of the brethren. Especially of the ordained men.

And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and, behold, a beam *is* in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye. (*Matthew 7:3-5*)

This is not to say that we should not exhort one another to far better than what we do. Rather, it is say that we should consider the frailties of our own flesh before outright condemnation of someone, and thus exhort in love for them.

Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some *is*; but exhorting *one another*: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching. (*Hebrews 10:25*)

Neither is it to say that we should not rebuke a brother for the sin they engage in. The criteria for rebuke is the spirit in which it is done. It is imperative that it be done in love for the erring brother.

Faithful *are* the wounds of a friend; but the kisses of an enemy *are* deceitful. (*Proverb 27:6*)

Let the righteous smite me; *it shall be* a kindness: and let him reprove me; *it shall be* an excellent oil, which shall not break my head: for yet my prayer also *shall be* in their calamities. (*Psalms 141:5*)

Reprove not a scorner, lest he hate thee: rebuke a wise man, and he will love thee. (*Proverb 9:8*)

He that rebuketh a man afterwards shall find more favour than he that flattereth with the tongue. (*Proverb 28:23*)

And of the elders, it is written that they are to be entreated as a father. (I Timothy 5:1)

2. The perception that God's word and God stand or fall based upon the performance of His people.

If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself. (*II Timothy 2:13*)

3. The magnification of our own faults – that they are hopelessly irresolvable.

But Jesus beheld *them*, and said unto them, With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible. (*Matthew 19:26*)

And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive. (*Matthew 21:22*)

I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me. (*Philippians 4:13*)

4. That the pastor, deacons, elders and/or brethren are the standard for holiness, separation, personal conduct, etc., etc.

Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset *us*, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of *our* faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. (*Hebrews 12:1-2*)

5. The idea that persons (brethren) are of such authority that they are not answerable for their interpretation and application of the word of God. (Well, if so and so said it, it must be right.)

Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all *of you* be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble. (*I Peter 5:5*)

It is better to trust in the LORD than to put confidence in man. (Psalm:118:8)

6. The perception that everyone that names Christ, or claims to be Christian and/or Baptist, is.

But what I do, that I will do, that I may cut off occasion from them which desire occasion; that wherein they glory, they may be found even as we. For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore *it is* no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works. *(II Corinthians 11:12-15)*

For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist. Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward. Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into *your* house, neither bid him God speed: For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds. *(II John:7-11)*

What I am referring to here is not to be hateful and difficult to these people. Rather, it is to realize that these people do not hold a right gospel, and do not know the Lord Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour. They need a proper witness placed in from of them as well. This is so that they will come to the knowledge of the Lord, or they will not be able to abide the witness and depart. In any case they require prayer.

Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the

common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort *you* that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints. For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ. (*Jude:3-4*)

Of these it is written:

These are spots in your feasts of charity, when they feast with you, feeding themselves without fear: clouds *they are* without water, carried about of winds; trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots; Raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever. (*Jude:12-13*)

We must maintain the mindset that the LORD has on those that do not preach the exact Gospel He has delivered.

I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any *man* preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed. (*Galatians 1:6-9*)

The focus here is witness and testimony. If we don't perceive that someone is lost, we won't witness to them.

Ecumenism is one of the greatest dangers we face today. The pull and pressure to accept anyone and everyone that names Christ without question is very strong. When anyone questions

the validity of the doctrine of another they are called hateful, divisive, difficult, etc., etc.

Ecumenism (or unity for the sake of unity) is condemned of God.

REMEMBER, SATAN DOES NOT HAVE A PROBLEM LYING! – JOHN 8:44

7. That our clothing, music, associations, what we watch, and partake of, doesn't matter.

Love not the world, neither the things *that are* in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. (*I John 2:15*)

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, *which is* your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what *is* that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God. (*Romans 12:1-2*)

Some of our weapons and tactics.

Weapons:

1. Prayer

But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; (*Matthew 5:44*)

Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man. (*Luke 21:36*)

Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. (*Philippians 4:6*)

2. The word of God

And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: . . . (*Ephesians 6:17*)

How we wield this particular weapon is dependent upon the same things that wielding any weapon of war is dependent upon. We must:

- Have implicit trust in the weapon we use.
- Be intimately familiar with the weapon.
- Be continually exercised with the weapon. (I am reminded of the United States Marine Corps creed "My Rifle")

Do you know absolutely that the Bible you hold is the word of God without error.

Do you know that the Holy Ghost dictated every word of it to the men that wrote it down. (King James did, William Tyndale did, so have innumerable Baptist brethren over the centuries.)

I am not talking about: "I'm pretty sure," here.

The words of the LORD are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times. Thou shalt keep them, O LORD, thou shalt preserve them from this generation for ever. (*Psalms 12:6-7*)

LAMED. For ever, O LORD, thy word is settled in heaven. (*Psalms 119:89*)

Thy word is true from the beginning: and every one of thy righteous judgments endureth for ever. (*Psalms 119:160*)

Every word of God is pure: he is a shield unto them that put their trust in him. (*Proverbs 30:5*)

I will worship toward thy holy temple, and praise thy name for

thy lovingkindness and for thy truth: for thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name. (*Psalm 138:2*)

Our Tactics

1. A constant situational awareness (SA).

Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: . . . (*I Peter 5:8*)

2. A prepared, sober mind.

But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine: That the aged men be sober, grave, temperate, sound in faith, in charity, in patience. The aged women likewise, that *they be* in behaviour as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things; That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, *To be* discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed. Young men likewise exhort to be sober minded. In all things shewing thyself a pattern of good works: in doctrine *shewing* uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity, Sound speech, that cannot be condemned; that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you. (*Titus 2:1-8*)

This is not to say that we have no joy. Joy and soberness are not mutually exclusive. Our joy is not dependent upon external circumstance, but rather upon our position in Christ and our cognizance of that position.

Joy is NOT frivolousness, or silliness, or fun.

But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God. (*Acts 20:24*)

For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. (*Romans 14:17*)

Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost. (*Romans 15:13*)

Consider the following situations wherein joy is expressed, and why joy is expressed. Please note that these all are sober situations.

Great is my boldness of speech toward you, great is my glorying of you: I am filled with comfort, I am exceeding joyful in all our tribulation. (*II Corinthians 7:4*)

How that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality. (*II Corinthians 8:2*)

But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy. (*I Peter 4:13*)

3. A remembrance that the Lord Jesus Christ has already defeated the devil, death and hell. Our war is one that determines whether or not we effectively carry the Gospel.

But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway. (*I Corinthians 9:27*)

Holding faith, and a good conscience; which some having put away concerning faith have made shipwreck: . . . (*I Timothy 1:19*)

Why do I bring up the body? Because that is the most frequently Satan has in his war against us.

This will do two things for us:

- We maintain a right perspective thus avoiding silly notions about what we are doing. (i.e. Frank Peretti)
- It gives us an achievable end.

4. To flee. (Discretion is the better part of valor.)

Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body. (*I Corinthians 6:18*)

Wherefore, my dearly beloved, flee from idolatry. (*I Corinthians 10:14*)

But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness. (Flee the love of money, and the lusts of the flesh) (*I Timothy 6:11*)

Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart. (*II Timothy 2:22*)

The example is Joseph, who fled Potipher's wife, thus maintaining his witness and testimony.

If however, the view we have is that all this got Joseph was jail-time: Then we have a short-sighted view. Joseph persevered in the things he saw. Joseph's vision was the kingdom of God and God's promises. Therefore he fled to maintain a proper witness and testimony. Joseph believed the LORD implicitly.

5. Perseverance.

Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints; . . . (*Ephesians 6:18*)

The issue is not whether our course is long, or short. Rather, it is whether or not we finish our course, and how we finish.

The Medal of Honor – meaningful to men; meaningless to God. ((This is not to denigrate the Medal of Honor. Rather, it is to render it in its proper place. We MUST understand that any honor bestowed by any nation will perish along with that nation, regardless of how honorable it may appear. In this, the Word of God is express:

The voice said, Cry. And he said, What shall I cry? All flesh *is* grass, and all the goodliness thereof *is* as the flower of the field: The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: because the spirit of the LORD bloweth upon it: surely the people *is* grass. The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever. (*Isaiah 40:6-8*)

And again:

And at the end of the days I Nebuchadnezzar lifted up mine eyes unto heaven, and mine understanding returned unto me, and I blessed the most High, and I praised and honoured him that liveth for ever, whose dominion *is* an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom *is* from generation to generation: And all the inhabitants of the earth *are* reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and *among* the inhabitants of the

earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou? (*Daniel 4:34-35*) See also Daniel 2:31-45 and Acts 17:24-28.

We should also understand that no nation holds the place the LORD reserved for Israel because of Abraham:

He sheweth his word unto Jacob, his statutes and his judgments unto Israel. He hath not dealt so with any nation: and *as for his* judgments, they have not known them. Praise ye the LORD. (*Psalms 147:19-20*)

And even Israel did not, and does not escape the judgment of the LORD, nor does the LORD honor them when they choose to honor man as the Scripture states:

The LORD lifteth up the meek: he casteth the wicked down to the ground. Sing unto the LORD with thanksgiving; sing praise upon the harp unto our God: Who covereth the heaven with clouds, who prepareth rain for the earth, who maketh grass to grow upon the mountains. He giveth to the beast his food, *and* to the young ravens which cry. He delighteth not in the strength of the horse: he taketh not pleasure in the legs of a man. The LORD taketh pleasure in them that fear him, in those that hope in his mercy. (*Psalms 147:6-11*)

And again:

Love not the world, neither the things *that are* in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that *is* in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever. (*1 John 2:15-17*))

What is expected of us.

Doth he thank that servant because he did the things that were commanded him? I trow not. So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do. (*Luke 17:9-10*)

SMEDLEY, LARRY E.

(Citation to accompany the award of the Congressional Medal of Honor)

Rank and organization: Corporal, U.S. Marine Corps, Company D, 1st Battalion, 7th Marines, 1st Marine Division. Place and date: Quang Nam Province, Republic of Vietnam, 21 December 1967. Entered service at: Orlando, Fla. Born: 4 March 1949, Front Royal, Va. Citation: For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty while serving as a squad leader with company D, in connection with operations against the enemy. On the evenings of 20-21 December 1967, Cpl. Smedley led his 6-man squad to an ambush site at the mouth of Happy Valley,

near Phouc Ninh (2) in Quang Nam Province. Later that night an estimated 100 Viet Cong and North Vietnamese Army regulars, carrying 122mm rocket launchers and mortars, were observed moving toward Hill 41. Realizing this was a significant enemy move to launch an attack on the vital DaNang complex, Cpl. Smedley immediately took sound and courageous action to stop the enemy threat. After he radioed for a reaction force, he skillfully maneuvered his men to a more advantageous position and led an attack on the numerically superior enemy force. A heavy volume of fire from an enemy machinegun positioned on the left flank of the squad inflicted several casualties on Cpl. Smedley's unit. Simultaneously, an enemy rifle grenade exploded nearby, wounding him in the right foot and knocking him to the ground. Cpl. Smedley disregarded this serious injury and valiantly struggled to his feet, shouting words of encouragement to his men. He fearlessly led a charge against the enemy machinegun emplacement, firing his rifle and throwing grenades, until he was again struck by enemy fire and knocked to the ground. Gravely wounded and weak from loss of blood, he rose and commenced a 1-man assault against the enemy position. Although his aggressive and singlehanded attack resulted in the destruction of the machinegun, he was struck in the chest by enemy fire and fell mortally wounded. Cpl. Smedley's inspiring and courageous actions, bold initiative, and selfless devotion to duty in the face of certain death were in keeping with the highest traditions of the Marine Corps and the U.S. Naval Service. He gallantly gave his life for his country.

What did this man die for?

Was it corruptible, or incorruptible?

Which "country" will continue – America: Or the country spoken of in Hebrews 11, of which it is written:

These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of *them*, and embraced *them*, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country. And truly, if they had been mindful of that *country* from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned. But now they desire a better *country*, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city. (*Hebrews 11:13-16*)

Therefore, the admonition for us is as follows:

For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds. Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin. (*Hebrews 12:3-4*)

We should understand what this war is all about. We should also understand that our Lord and Saviour paid the highest price of all for us – while we were yet His enemies. Thus, no matter how much we do, it will never equal the sacrifice the Lord made for us. Ultimately, we are unprofitable servants. We should at least try to do far better than what we do. We owe it to the Lord out of love for Him.

Finis

Counting the Cost

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And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple. For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it? (Luke 14:27-28)



It wasn't much to look at. Just a base of gray concrete with a piece of painted aluminum embedded in it. Immediately behind the concrete was a small monolith, its angled granite face simply engraved. It bore a small statement of fact, an engraved aircraft, and six names. Unless you knew the history, you would not understand the significance of the memorial. From a distance it really wasn't what you would think of as a way to remember. In fact, unless you purposely paid attention, you could easily miss it, even though it was not far from the entrance of Hanger 2.

When I saw it, I knew the significance of the memorial, having read about the incident some years before. The piece of painted aluminum was the patch of skin from the nose of the aircraft where the last four of the serial number is painted. The engraving was of an RC-135S, a Cobra Ball. The names were of the crew members that died that final, fatal flight:

Maj. William R. Bennett, Capt. Larry A. Mayfield, 1st Lt. Loren O. Ginter, MSgt. Stephen L. Kish, SSgt. Steven C. Balcer, SSgt. Harry L. Parsons III.

The statement of fact expressed the dedication of the members of the 24th Strategic Reconnaissance Squadron, and the 6985th Electronic Security Squadron to carry on the assigned mission until ordered otherwise – despite the cost.

The site of the memorial is a strange place. Situated where the Northern Pacific Ocean and the Bering Sea meet, it is a place closer to Tokyo, Japan than to Anchorage, the leading city of the state to which the island belongs. The place is Shemya, Alaska. A tiny, windswept, cold, almost barren island 30 miles from the end of the Aleutian Island chain. To the North and West is Siberia. To the East, hundreds of miles away, is the Alaskan mainland. To the South, thousands of miles of open ocean. The only persons that inhabit this island are the military, and the civil service assigned here. Perhaps in their tour of duty, they might see the sun twice, such is the weather. But the RC-135S and its mission are the reason why they are here.

Strategic Air Command placed great demands upon its members, especially those of its reconnaissance wings. The reason such demands were required was clear to the senior officers and NCO's of the command: If the United States were to be secure from enemy attack, constant vigilance was required. The mission of the RC-135S, 24th SRS and the 6985th ESS were at the

forefront of the battle for determining the capability of the Soviet Strategic Missile forces. Without regard to weather, time of day, or day of the year, if the Soviets acted, the Cobra Ball and its crew watched, often for 20 to 24 hours at a time. Only leaving their aerial station when relieved, or all activity on the other side ceased. It was as much a war of nerves and dogged determination as it was anything else.

On 15 March 1981, aircraft 61-2664 was returning to Shemya from Eielson AFB in Fairbanks. Having spent the previous night in Amber Hall, (named for a Rivet Amber aircraft that was lost over the Bering Sea in 1969) they had waited for favorable weather. When they left Eielson the weather was marginally acceptable, but in the four hours it took to arrive at Shemya, the weather at Shemya had become treacherous. Usually Shemya's weather was bad by normal standards, only it was more so this night. Fog, rain, snow and driving winds of 45 to 50 knots are common. The Cobra Ball crews are specifically trained and qualified to handle just such weather. However, this night had become exceedingly difficult: The crosswinds blew sleet and snow reducing visibility to nothing. As one report put it, they were now below minimum safe landing conditions. As they began the final mile to touchdown on the runway they descended in utter darkness unable to determine exactly where they were. Suddenly they found themselves low and off the runway. In an attempt to regain alignment the pilot began to turn the aircraft. At 2:30 A.M., Cobra Ball 61-2664's right wing impacted the ground. In the subsequent crash, six of the twenty-four crewmembers were killed. In the battle for the Cold War, six more casualties were added to the list.

I know that there are some who will say "This has nothing to do with me, why do you even bring it up?" Why do I have to know about an airplane that crashed over twenty years ago?

The answers are somewhat hard to express. We live in the present, established on the past, and are building something for the future. Do we know what we received from the past? How

precious is that which we have received from the past? What do we choose to remember from the past? Or is it that we have become so wrapped up in our present that we have no care and concern for those things handed down by those who came before us?

What does it matter, the price paid for us to have the truth? If we have no connection with the past, it will not matter to us the memorials that are left for us. Those memorials are supposed to cause us to remember something – to have a connection with the events of the past. In that way they become real to us, those events of the past gain significance to us. Otherwise, they are just so many fairy tales, having no more weight in our minds than the fantasy story of Peter Pan.

For the 24th SRS, and 6985th ESS the loss of 61-2664 and 6 crew was not fantasy – it was, and is, reality. Even today, the memorial having been moved to Offutt AFB, Nebraska when the mission ended in 1994, the crash of 61-2664 has significance, and is real to those personnel assigned to strategic reconnaissance at Offutt. It is part of their history, their heritage. It is part of the definition of who they are.

Even so, the sacrifice of our Baptist brethren should be part of who we are. We did not come into this truth of God in a vacuum. We did not learn of the salvation that is by grace through faith because it was spoken out of thin air one day. No, someone passed this revelation of God's grace on to us, just as it was passed to them – by someone before them. How did they come to know? Yet again, someone before them brought the true message of God's grace. How did we get the word of God: The Scriptures? Some church held fast the truth of the whole counsel of God, and its people were determined they would not let it slip. And yet, another church before it did the same – and another church before that one – all the way back to Jerusalem.

All along the way, brethren paid the price for that truth.

Their memorials are written more in heaven, remembered by the Lord they served, than in the world. The world would like for us to forget they ever existed, and tries mightily to make us forget. Unless we make a direct and conscious effort to learn of our brethren that suffered to deliver unto us this truth of the Lord and His Kingdom, we will never know what price was paid for us to have the blessing of salvation. Instead we, like most of the people around us, would be bound for an eternity in Hell.

As I look at the picture I took of that memorial at Shemya, I am struck by the thought that the men who died that night, could have elected to be somewhere else. They could have chosen a different path. They could have still served their country – in a different unit, far away from this difficult island, and its attendant mission. No, they could have let someone else do it. Someone else could have missed their family for weeks at a time. Someone else could have risked their life to gather that information. They could have complained “Why do I have to do it.” You know, they didn’t do any of those things. They accepted the risks, the separation from their families, and they did not complain. You just don’t do that kind of mission without volunteering. They knew up front what they were getting into – and accepted it.

Because of their unwavering dedication and devotion to duty, the occasion of their death moved subsequent members of those units involved in the Cobra Ball mission to declare:

WE CARRY ON RESOLVED TO HONOR YOUR MEMORY

Brethren, what do we owe those who came before us? Is it possible for us to declare for our Lord and our brethren that we will carry on? Or, are we not moved by such sacrifices? If we do not carry on, we won’t win the war. And we will have made ourselves the last generation.

Finis

The Television

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A study about the influence of television on the believer's ability to conduct spiritual warfare.

Introduction

This outline has two points I wish to make concerning Spiritual Warfare. The first point is that we, as believers, are fighting this spiritual war the wrong way. Like Israel, both ancient and modern, we think that the war is fought by someone else. Moreover, we do not seem to understand that our actions, no matter how benign and mundane they appear be, are not. We cannot grasp that we are frequently our own worst enemies in this war because we discount the things we are involved in.

The second point is that we are ignoring the television and its influence on our ability to fight in this spiritual war. Moreover, we are unwilling to take decisive action against this pervasive influence. In short, we do not like the price we must pay to be effective in this war.

It is sad that so many "fundamental, bible-believing" Christians are unwilling to take the Lord's warnings seriously about looking upon evil. It is not enough that we are bombarded with wickedness everywhere we go, but must we invite it into our homes as well? It is this failure to clean out the home that leads to the defeat of so many otherwise strong Christians.

I. Where is the enemy?

March 21st, 2002 was a gray, overcast day in Jerusalem, Israel. King George street was crowded with shoppers in preparation for the coming Passover. In the midst of the afternoon, as so many people went about their business on this street that had been the scene of so many Palestinian attacks upon Israel, surely security was tight. After all, IDF soldiers are everywhere. Israeli Intelligence, always up on so many movements of the opposition, surely would know of an impending attack. Had not the intelligence services and the IDF so many times before singled out Palestinian officers in the midst of traffic in crowded cities and dispatched them with accuracy and efficiency? Surely, there is nothing to worry about. Would not the police and the military be on highest alert at this place, just prior to the holiest of Jewish holy days; the Passover?

Except – recently, despite the peace efforts of the United States and Israel and all the security, attacks seem to have gotten through. Just that niggling of doubt and question. Oh well, not today – perhaps. ((This is a synopsis of a Debkafile report following a suicide bombing in Jerusalem. It is used to illustrate the complacency and misunderstanding that individuals have about war and how it is waged. Far to many “Christians” are stuck in the rut of thinking that the Devil has some respect for them, or that there are some lines he just will not cross. Worse yet, quite a number of “fundamentalists” think that the Lord will “bullet-proof” them so that the Devil cannot touch them.

It should be clear by this point in history that the above ideas are about as valid as thinking one can raise rice in the midst of the Sahara Desert without any assistance whatsoever.))

Fighting the war the wrong way.

And Israel abode in Shittim, and the people began to

commit whoredom with the daughters of Moab.

And they called the people unto the sacrifices of their gods: and the people did eat, and bowed down to their gods.

And Israel joined himself unto Baal-peor: and the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel.

And the LORD said unto Moses, Take all the heads of the people, and hang them up before the LORD against the sun, that the fierce anger of the LORD may be turned away from Israel.

And Moses said unto the judges of Israel, Slay ye every one his men that were joined unto Baal-peor.

And, behold, one of the children of Israel came and brought unto his brethren a Midianitish woman in the sight of Moses, and in the sight of all the congregation of the children of Israel, who were weeping before the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. (*Numbers 25:1-6*)

II. What exactly is a television?

By that I mean: What category of thing would a television fit into? What does it do? What can you use it for?

The television is a tool.

1. The television is a rather different kind of tool than we are used to, but a tool nonetheless.
2. As a tool, an inanimate object, it itself is not intrinsically good or evil.
3. However, unlike most tools we are familiar with, the television can convey information in the form of sound and images. ***This is where the issue lies.***

Some things to consider:

1. What is the quality, or content of the information transmitted unto the viewer.
2. How perceptive are we of the information presented unto

us?

3. Do we always consciously perceive the information presented?
4. When we do perceive the information presented, do we always catch the subtlety of the message?
5. Do we always note the secondary messages presented?

III. The television and spiritual warfare.

1. The vast majority of this medium of communication belongs to the world and thus Satan. (99.9999%)
2. The deceitfulness and subtlety of Satan is such that we cannot, without a close walk with God, determine when we are being deceived, and thus influenced to think and do wickedly. i.e. Peter (Matt. 16:21-23), James and John (Luke 9:52-55), etc, etc. (Remember the third of the host of heaven (Rev. 12:3-4))

Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: (*1 Peter 5:8*)

What then is the difference between watching television and going to Wal-Mart?

1. We don't spend hours every day in Wal-Mart.
2. We are generally focused on specific tasks at hand in Wal-Mart.
3. We know that Wal-Mart is worldly and ungodly (at least we ought to) and are thus on our guard. (By the way, how many of you men go through the checkout lane in Wal-Mart and look at the magazine covers? How many parents allow their children to go through the checkout lane and look at the magazine covers? What about the Mall?)
4. We can generally choose which parts of Wal-Mart we enter into. (Men, do you follow you wives through the Lingerie section? Or, do you avoid it?)

D. For the Television.

1. How many of you are faster on the remote than the television is at switching scenes?
2. How many of you allow(ed) your children (or yourself) to watch Captain Planet (or other such cartoons) not realizing that it (they) teach rank environmentalism – of which witchcraft and evolution are major components? (By the way, evolution is not expressly reserved to humanist doctrine.)
3. How many of you catch the humanist/evolutionist bias in the documentaries you watch on the History Channel, in the News and on Discovery Channel? What about the pro-Catholic bias present on these same channels? (Several years ago I watched a documentary on the Gunpowder Plot. It was entirely presented with a pro-Catholic, anti-King James bias.)
4. How many sports programs are interlaced with alcohol/lewdly suggestive commercials? How many major sports figures live ungodly lives and don't mind displaying it?
5. When was the last time that the 'news' was interlaced with Victoria Secret, or Hanes Her Way commercials? (While I am at it, what about the commercial by a burger chain several years ago that had more to do with illicit relations between a boy and a girl than the merits of a particular hamburger? Or, as I was informed, of the more recent Mentos commercial that completely undermined a father's authority in the home?)
6. How many of you catch the fact that the vast majority of 'entertainment programming' teaches both you, and your children to rebel against all God-ordained authority?

How many of you were, or are able to avoid these things on the television?

IV. The danger of viewing, or hearing something.

A. God warns us about looking upon evil.

And delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked:

(For that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds;) (*2 Peter 2:7-8*)

Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?

And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?

And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you,

And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty. (*II Corinthians 6:14-7:1*)

The crux of the matter

Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God. (*II Corinthians 7:1*)

For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light:

(For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness

and righteousness and truth;)

Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord.

And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.

For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret. (*Ephesians 5:8-12*)

See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise,

Redeeming the time, because the days are evil. (*Ephesians 5:15-16*)

B. Satan cannot use what is not there.

Only God can create. The only thing that Satan can do is pervert that which already exists.

If you will notice, when Satan tempted Christ he did not present something that did not already exist. In fact, if one will research all the false religions in the world, it will be found that they are all to a greater or lesser extent perversions of the true Gospel of the Lord.

Please note: It is logically impossible for a creature to know anything outside of the context of its existence.

C. What we see, hear, taste, touch, smell, or feel stays with us all our life long. Every bit of it.

Not only that: We will answer for what we partake of and put forth.

But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. (*Matthew 12:36*)

For we know him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people. (*Hebrews 10:30*)

Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners. (*1 Corinthians 15:33*)

V. Affecting the Warrior.

1. Just how effective are you at presenting the gospel when you know you have sinned and displeased God?
2. How effective are you at presenting the gospel when you doubt your own salvation?
3. How many ideas of things you want to do with your life are initiated, or driven by something you have observed that was ungodly, from the television? Or, how many of your actions are motivated by the ideas and concepts promoted by the television?

What about this idea: When was the last time it was presented in a positive light on television? (*For that matter, when was the last time it was presented at all?*)

And that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again. (2 *Corinthians 5:15*)

VI. Affecting the Camp.

The church is weakened when its covenanted members are themselves weakened.

- Remember Aachen and the Valley of Achor? (Joshua 7)

VII. Conclusion

Where is the enemy: Revisited

You do know, Satan's most effective way of neutralizing the children of God is to be right there with them subtly getting them comfortable with his presence, and with the presence of sin.

From DEBKAFfile – March 21: The Palestinian suicide bombing that shattered lives and storefronts in downtown Jerusalem on Thursday also made a shambles of any coherent Israeli and US policy toward Yasser Arafat. The aftershock of the attack would be even greater were it not for an Israeli court's gag order, issued at the urging of the prime minister's office, banning full DEBKAFfile reporting on the atrocity.

What DEBKAFfile can report is the account offered by the Jerusalem police: A suicide bomber killed three people and wounded 87 others when he struck Jerusalem's central shopping district on an overcast afternoon, yards from a dozen deadly terrorist atrocities in the past year. The horror was unimaginable – even in a city that has lost count of the atrocities visited upon it by Palestinian terrorists. Severed heads rolled down the sidewalks of King George Street, which was littered with limbs. Dozens of wounded writhed in agony from the nails and screws that spewed from the bomber's explosives belt.

The attack spelled the failure of moves by US President George Bush, envoy Anthony Zinni, vice president Dick Cheney and Israeli prime minister Ariel Sharon to come to terms with Arafat. The failure was two-fold. As DEBKAFfile has written many times, Arafat simply does not want peace. He also does not want the ceasefire work plan drawn up by CIA director George Tenet, nor the truce-to-talks blueprint charted by an international panel led by former US senator George Mitchell. The Palestinian leader seeks the destruction of the state of Israel and he will use any means or trick to achieve his goal.

I remember a message by Brother Brian Disney of Mission Boulevard Baptist Church delivered on October 9th, 1996 titled 'Step by Step to the Slaughter: The Gradual Decay of Character' where he spoke about the 'pigcatcher' and equated the methods of the pigcatcher to Satan and the world.

I have two questions relating to this:

1. Just who let the pigcatcher into the home?
2. Who makes the decision to allow the world into the home – without opposition.

Brethren – Satan is driving at the very same thing for you. The total destruction of your witness, your testimony and you. He will not stop until he achieves it, and he is using the television to do it.

Fighting the war the wrong way – Revisited

Then Balak the son of Zippor, king of Moab, arose and warred against Israel, and sent and called Balaam the son of Beor to curse you: (*Joshua 24:9*)

But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication. (*Revelation 2:14*)
(the church in Pergamos)

Balaam was a tool of the enemy against Israel. (By the way, just who was the real enemy of Israel?)

- See Revelation 12:1-5)

The Solution God offers

And when Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, saw it, he rose up from among the congregation, and took a javelin in his hand; And he went after the man of Israel into the tent, and thrust both of them through, the man of Israel, and the woman through her belly. So the plague was stayed from the children of Israel. (*Numbers 25:7-8*)

And they slew the kings of Midian, beside the rest of them that were slain; namely, Evi, and Rekem, and Zur, and Hur, and Reba, five kings of Midian: Balaam also the son of Beor they slew with the sword. (*Numbers 31:8*)

Behold, these caused the children of Israel, through the counsel of Balaam, to commit trespass against the LORD in the matter of Peor, and there was a plague among the congregation of the LORD. (*Numbers 31:16*)

A Caution

One can, and many have, argued that all things are 'lawful unto them' and that they have 'liberty.' Those persons would do well to remember the admonitions that go with these phrases. We should not ever use our liberty in Christ as an occasion for the flesh. Nor should we partake of those things that do not edify. To do so is to subvert the very reason the Lord left us on this earth.

Moreover, since we are in a war – how much sense does it make to walk into the enemy camp and hand over your loaded weapon; then sit down with your back to the enemy?

Finis

“The Passion”

Religious Movies and Faith



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<http://www.reproachofmen.org/blog/subscribe-to-this-blog/>.

Before I get started, I know that my position as stated herein, will be controversial with many. I know that many of those who name themselves as fundamental, independent Baptists have seen this movie. Many, including pastors and missionaries will advocate seeing it. I also know that many have written against this movie and it is not hard to find various reasons stated for not viewing this film. However, I wish to approach this movie from a point of view that I have not seen expounded upon – the point of view of faith. My position is based solely upon the word of God. After careful searching of the sense the Lord gave me about this movie (It is a Catholic movie with a Catholic Jesus, based upon corrupt scripture and writings.), I found that there was actually a stronger reason than the fact that it is Catholic for not seeing it. In fact, what I found was a bit disturbing.

To begin, there are some questions I would like to pose for your consideration.

1. Why does the Scripture not describe the sufferings of the Lord Jesus Christ in graphic detail?
2. Why does the Scripture not describe the Lord Jesus Christ's physical features in detail (or enough to positively identify Him were He to appear in front of us)?
3. Why did Abraham, who had seen the Lord Jesus, not make an image (drawing or painting) and tell his son Isaac what the Lord looked like?
4. Why did John the Apostle not describe the physical features of the Lord Jesus in both the Gospel and in Revelation?
5. Is the Lord Jesus Christ Almighty God? Really?

To begin answering these questions, and see the perspective

that I am coming from, I have included a number of passages from Scripture that are all linked by a particular commonality.

In the 20th chapter of the Gospel of John, the challenge to Thomas is related to us. Apparently, Thomas had a common problem – he would not believe unless he saw in person – the Lord Jesus Christ and the peculiar identifying marks of His suffering.

But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came. The other disciples therefore said unto him, We have seen the Lord. But he said unto them, Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe. And after eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them: *then* came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you. Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust *it* into my side: and be not faithless, but believing. And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God. Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed *are* they that have not seen, and yet have believed. (*John 20:24-29*)

Please note in the above passage the rebuke the Lord gives Thomas when He told him “and be not faithless, but believing.” Thomas’ problem was one of failure to exercise the faith he had been given by the Lord. However, we should also note what the Lord said immediately following His rebuke of Thomas, and Thomas’ confession to the Lord: “Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed *are* they that have not seen, and yet have believed.” It is this statement that should frame any desire we have to see any depiction of the life and work of the Lord Jesus Christ outside the confines of the Scripture.

A failure to identify the Lord Jesus Christ and who He is, is nothing new on this earth. When the Lord Jesus was in the midst of His earthly ministry many people did not know who He was, and expressed it to the Lord quite plainly. One such incident happened at the feast of the dedication:

And it was at Jerusalem the feast of the dedication, and it was winter. And Jesus walked in the temple in Solomon's porch. Then came the Jews round about him, and said unto him, How long dost thou make us to doubt? If thou be the Christ, tell us plainly. Jesus answered them, I told you, and ye believed not: the works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witness of me. But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you. My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any *man* pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave *them* me, is greater than all; and no *man* is able to pluck *them* out of my Father's hand. I and *my* Father are one. (*John 10:22-30*)

There are many things I use this particular passage for: I frequently use it to demonstrate that salvation is eternal and cannot be lost because the Lord holds those who are born again in His hand and no one (including that person) can remove them from the Lord's hand. I also use this passage to demonstrate that only those who belong to the Lord can 'hear His voice' in the Scripture. However, this particular time I would like to focus on the question and challenge raised by the Jews:

"Then came the Jews round about him, and said unto him, How long dost thou make us to doubt? If thou be the Christ, tell us plainly."

It is apparent that the Jews were looking right at the Lord Jesus, but could not discern that He was the Messiah, the Son of God. The reason why is given in the Lord's answer to them, and by extension – to us:

“Jesus answered them, I told you, and ye believed not: the works that I do in my Father’s name, they bear witness of me. But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you.”

The terrible thing about this is that He had told them repeatedly who He was, and had proved it by His life and work – yet they could not believe that the man they were looking at was indeed the Son of God.

Why not? Is it strictly because they would not believe? To whom is it given to be able to identify and know the Lord Jesus Christ? Shouldn’t everyone be able to identify the Lord Jesus Christ? Doesn’t the Lord want to save everyone? Of a certainty the Lord does desire the repentance and salvation of everyone. However, he will not reveal who He is to just everyone, and he does not use worldly methods to provide that revelation.

One of the most important passages in Scripture about the foundation of the church also contains a very important spiritual truth about knowing who the Lord Jesus Christ is. In Matthew, chapter 16, the Lord challenges His disciples as to His identity:

When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of man am? And they said, Some say *that thou art* John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets. He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed *it* unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. (*Matthew 16:13-17*)

The key in the above passage is the fact that Simon Peter knew who the Lord was because God the Father had revealed Jesus’ identity to him by faith. This provides quite a contrast to

the witness of the Jews in John, chapter 10, who could not at all discern who the Lord really was. To understand this dichotomy, it is necessary to note the exact wording of the Lord's reply to Simon: "for flesh and blood hath not revealed *it* unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven." Of all things, this is the practical description of the operation of the instrument called faith. It is essential to understand that nothing earthly, or worldly is at all able to reveal to anyone who the Lord Jesus Christ really is. No, that understanding and knowledge is strictly confined to the operation of faith.

The necessity of faith and its effectiveness in revealing spiritual truth is given in Hebrews, chapter 11. For the sake of brevity, only the first six verses of the chapter are shown as they particularly pertain to this discussion.

Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. For by it the elders obtained a good report. Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear. By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaketh. By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God. But without faith *it is* impossible to please *him*: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and *that* he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him. (*Hebrews 11:1-6*)

Even though none of us were there, if we use the faith the Lord imparts to us upon the hearing of His word, we will understand and know the truth of how this world, and the surrounding universe were made. Through the instrument and operation of faith, Abel knew that the proper means of honoring the Lord was by offering a blood sacrifice from the

flock to show a picture of the sacrifice of the Lord that was to come in the then distant future. Cain, not having faith, offered a sacrifice that pleased him, instead of the Lord. Cain, by earthly reason, offered what he thought would honor the Lord, not discerning the reason for a specific blood sacrifice. Though we are not told much about Enoch, it is clear that faith, and its operation were essential to his ability to please the Lord. Finally, we are warned, if we do not use faith to know and understand the truth that God has put before us in His word, we cannot please Him at all. Rather, without faith and its operation, it is impossible to please God, no matter how good it looks to men.

In the following passage, we find that faith is essential, even for the believer, to discern when the Lord is telling us something through His word, and to know that it is indeed the Lord who is revealing things to us, and putting verses in our mind. After all, Satan knows the Scripture far better than we do, and has no problem using Scripture to deceive us into doing things for him, and to the detriment of the gospel.

And, behold, two of them went that same day to a village called Emmaus, which was from Jerusalem *about* threescore furlongs. And they talked together of all these things which had happened. And it came to pass, that, while they communed *together* and reasoned, Jesus himself drew near, and went with them. But their eyes were holden that they should not know him. (*Luke 24:13-16*)

It is interesting that these two are disciples that walked with the Lord for quite some time prior to His crucifixion. Now, only three days later, they cannot identify Him when he walks up to them on the road to Emmaus. The Scripture plainly states that their eyes are holden, and they cannot not perceive who He is. Instead, they are somewhat incredulous at the question posed to them by the Lord Jesus about the reason for their dispirited attitude. In the verses following this passage, we are told that The Lord upbraided, or rebuked them

for their hardness of heart.

It is this hardness of heart that prevented the Lord's disciples from discerning who He was at that moment. Thus, we can see the Lord is under no obligation to reveal Himself to those who will not believe. More than that however, what is also shown here is that the Lord's appearance was something that was not readily discerned, or remembered. I tend to find it somewhat strange that only three days after the Lord was crucified that His own disciples that walked with Him virtually every day for three years, could not identify Him.

What this tells me is that any depiction of the Lord Jesus Christ, whether drawing, painting, play, or cinema is going to be inaccurate – in the extreme. Moreover, it is not going to help people identify and come to know the Lord Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour.

Why?

Because of the following testimony of Nathanael.

The day following Jesus would go forth into Galilee, and findeth Philip, and saith unto him, Follow me. Now Philip was of Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. Philip findeth Nathanael, and saith unto him, We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph. And Nathanael said unto him, Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth? Philip saith unto him, Come and see. Jesus saw Nathanael coming to him, and saith of him, Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile! Nathanael saith unto him, Whence knowest thou me? Jesus answered and said unto him, Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee. Nathanael answered and saith unto him, Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel. (*John 1:43-49*)

We must ask the question: How did Nathanael know it was the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God? The answer is simple, and

has nothing to do with appearance or emotion. Rather, it has everything to do with the instrument of faith. Nathanael discerned the identity of the Lord Jesus by the instrument and operation of faith.

It is faith that will reveal the person of the Lord Jesus Christ – from the Scriptures. What Abraham told the rich man in hell is vital to understanding why so many “revivals” and evangelistic efforts based upon emotional appeal never work, nor do they seem to produce any long-lasting effects.

Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house: For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment. Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them. And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent. And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead. *(Luke 16:27-31)*

The rich man's logic is typical of what most everyone thinks – that a powerful emotional experience will shake up his brothers and they will repent and believe. However, the disapproval of that method by God (and thus Abraham) is readily apparent. Abraham's reply is critical to those wishing to “shake someone up” and thus “get them to believe” the gospel – it won't work. God may use certain events that He has brought about in a person's life to move them to hear the gospel. However, for us to manufacture emotional events to attempt to achieve a certain state in a person so that they will listen, is not given to us by the Lord. Only the Lord knows what will properly move a person towards Him, and what will not. We do not.

What the children of God are given to do is preach the word, live godly and holy in this present wicked world, and be obedient to the Lord. That is all. The Lord's children are

ambassadors, not actors. It is the Lord that will use His word that we preach to move the hearts of people. As He has plainly stated in the Old Testament:

For my thoughts *are* not your thoughts, neither *are* your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts. For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper *in the thing* whereto I sent it. (*Isaiah 55:8-11*)

Thus, the power is in the word, not us. The only thing we can do is hinder the person from hearing the word if we do not present a right and proper witness. It is imperative that we remember that Moses and many (if not all) the prophets were long dead when Abraham told the rich man "They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them."

There is a final thought from the word of God before addressing how doctrine is built, and the witness of three godly men; it is centered on the fifth question at the beginning of this (now lengthy) article: Is Jesus Christ Almighty God?

If He is, is it permissible to make any image at all of Him, even when He has taken the form of man? After all, His earthly ministry of being born in the flesh was not the first time He had appeared to men, in the form of a man. Yet, nowhere in Scripture do I find any detailed description, or depiction of His appearance that would enable anyone to make any model, painting, drawing, or any other depiction of Him that would be at all accurate. Why not?

Perhaps the following passage explains and sums up the reason

why.

And God spake all these words, saying, I *am* the LORD thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt have no other gods before me. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness *of any thing* that *is* in heaven above, or that *is* in the earth beneath, or that *is* in the water under the earth: Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God *am* a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth *generation* of them that hate me; (*Exodus 20:1-5*)

Wherefore, my dearly beloved, flee from idolatry. (*I Corinthians 10:14*)

Building Doctrine

And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day. (*John 6:40*)

The above passage from the mouth of the Lord Himself is very express, "every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life:" Thus, it is clear that the early church erred in not making drawings and paintings of the Lord Jesus so that everyone would see "him" and believe.

Really?

No, not really. One can, and the Catholics do, misinterpret passages such as this (as in the case of foot-washing) to build doctrines that are not at all pleasing to God. In fact, much of the doctrine that exists in "Christianity" today, does not please God. Why? Because it is built upon some other foundation that was not laid through the operation of faith. The operation of faith confirms what is written in the word of God, and for those things that are not express, faith will reveal the Scriptural principles that direct us in the way we

should go. Faith tells us that the Lord will not ever violate His word.

Thus, we can see that the passage of verse 40 is not literally, physically telling us that someone must “see” the Lord Jesus Christ, or His image (Does the Scripture really give us His description?) So they can be saved. No, far too many passages reveal that looking directly at the Lord Jesus in the flesh was not, and is not a guarantee that anyone would know who He is. This is also plainly illustrated in the same incident as verse 40.

The Jews then murmured at him, because he said, I am the bread which came down from heaven. And they said, Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? how is it then that he saith, I came down from heaven? (*John 6:41-42*)

Even though the Jews knew the history of Jesus and had seen the miracles done by Him, they could not discern who He really is. Thus, the crux of the whole issue of building doctrine comes down to this:

The reason why the disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ did not, and would not make any images of Him, or use anything to represent Him in any way – despite the fact that the Lord made the statement He did in verse 40, is because it would not guarantee that anyone would come to know Him personally. Instead, it would lead only to idolatry.

Abraham's Example

And the LORD appeared unto him in the plains of Mamre: and he sat in the tent door in the heat of the day; And he lift up his eyes and looked, and, lo, three men stood by him: and when he saw *them*, he ran to meet them from the tent door, and bowed himself toward the ground, And said, My Lord, if now I have found favour in thy sight, pass not away, I pray thee, from thy servant: Let a little water, I pray you, be fetched, and

wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree: And I will fetch a morsel of bread, and comfort ye your hearts; after that ye shall pass on: for therefore are ye come to your servant. And they said, So do, as thou hast said. (*Genesis 18:1-5*)

It is noteworthy that Abraham never described the physical appearance of the Lord to his son Isaac. Neither did the Lord find it prudent to have Moses put any description of Himself in the first five books of the Scripture.

Isaiah's Example

In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. (*Isaiah 6:1*)

Neither did Isaiah ever describe the physical appearance of the Lord, though he undoubtedly saw Him.

John's Example

I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet, Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and, What thou seest, write in a book, and send *it* unto the seven churches which are in Asia; unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea. And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks; And in the midst of the seven candlesticks *one* like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle. His head and *his* hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire; And his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters. And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went a sharp twoedged sword: and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength. And when I saw him, I fell at his

feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last: I *am* he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death. (*Revelation 1:10-18*)

Again, John, the disciple whom Jesus loved, gives no description of the physical features of the Lord. Rather, he does describe the glory of the Lord and His humility – both of which can be spiritually discerned.

Satan's Deception

This is what I fear: That in this late hour many are being deceived and led astray by emotion. Television and movies (in fact all visual stimulation) can be emotionally powerful. The individual that stated "A picture is worth a thousand words." never quite told the whole story. Indeed, if the picture is distorted, the story it will convey will be distorted as well. I am very familiar with the use of propaganda and the fact that photojournalists are frequently used by one side or the other to create emotional upheaval and sway persons to support one side or the other in a conflict. Why? Because pictures have the power to stimulate the emotions, and can be used to selectively illustrate a wrong. It is easy to isolate a subject and remove it from the proper context with photography. The same applies to cinema.

In the context of the above discussion, I would like to pose a question for consideration:

Outside of the fact that Jesus is God (and thus depicting Him is questionable), what Jesus is Mel Gibson depicting in this movie?

The reason I pose this question is due to the following passage of Scripture:

Would to God ye could bear with me a little in *my* folly: and indeed bear with me. For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present *you* as a chaste virgin to Christ. But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or *if* ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received, or another gospel, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with *him*. (*II Corinthians 11:1-4*)

Why was the apostle Paul so concerned? In the following passage from the same chapter, he clarifies:

But what I do, that I will do, that I may cut off occasion from them which desire occasion; that wherein they glory, they may be found even as we. For such *are* false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore *it is* no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works. (*II Corinthians 11:12-15*)

We must remember that Satan is all too willing to imitate the Lord for the express purpose of leading people away from salvation. The most effective means of doing that is to get them to believe in a false Jesus – one that only enables you to do the “good works” necessary to get to heaven. Instead of preaching the true Jesus that totally paid the price for our sin on the cross. When the Lord Jesus stated “It is finished.” and gave up the ghost, that meant that I did not need to do any works at all for salvation (not that I could anyway) (By the way, did Mel leave that line in the movie? Did anyone even notice in the emotion of the moment?).

For those who are believers, it is essential to remember that Satan has counterfeited virtually everything about the Lord’s

work – including redefining faith to make it a work only. As believers we should also remember that Satan knows the Scripture far better than we do. (After all, he attempted to use the Lord's own words against Him.)

The Lord's Commandments

As a child of the Lord, I am aware that the Lord has instructed me that if I love Him, I am to keep His commandments (John 14:15, 21) and he will manifest Himself to me. One of His commandments is found in II Corinthians concerning unclean things. In understanding this particular commandment, I looked up the word "clean" so I would know what "unclean" was (after all, if something is not clean, it must be unclean). What I found is that "unclean" meant that something is impure, tainted, unclear, or sullied. In other words, we could say that an unclear, or distorted gospel is unclean. Even more so, a deliberately distorted gospel is unclean.

In the Scripture, it is very express what the gospel is. Thus anything that does not adhere strictly to the Scripture's description of the gospel is an unclean gospel, and thus an unclean thing. It is very cut and dried, so to speak.

Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in *them*; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean *thing*; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty. (*II Corinthians 6:14-18*)

Now, what is touching? If we sit and absorb a message into our minds, that is certainly more than touching, isn't it? How then, can the Lord be pleased with me if I disobey His direct commandment? Do you think the Lord should bless anyone for their disobedience?

Conclusion

For me the Scripture is quite express and clear concerning the Lord Jesus Christ. I know who He is by faith. I knew who He is the night I was saved by Him and His work on the cross. How did I know? By the instrument and operation of faith. I know of His sufferings by faith, and I do not need a movie to "make it real" to me. I know that in the Scripture I am told that to walk by faith and not by sight, as it is written: "(For we walk by faith, not by sight:)" (*II Corinthians 5:7*)

I also know that I am to flee idolatry, not tolerate it. I am told by implication that I will not be strong enough to withstand the temptation of idolatry; that is why I must flee it, as it is again written: "Wherefore, my dearly beloved, flee from idolatry." (*I Corinthians 10:14*)

Finally, I am told not to glory in anything save the knowledge of the Lord. I am to be humble, and not proud of the knowledge and understanding of His word that He has given me, as it is also written:

Thus saith the LORD, Let not the wise *man* glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty *man* glory in his might, let not the rich *man* glory in his riches: But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I *am* the LORD which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these *things* I delight, saith the LORD. (*Jeremiah 9:23-24*)

Thus, this movie, and religious films in general are injurious to faith and its operation. Because of these things I cannot see this movie, or any other movies or plays depicting the

life and work of the Lord Jesus Christ, as it is plainly displeasing to the LORD.

Finis

J.R.R Tolkien's Middle Earth Series

A Christian work?

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This article is the second of two letters, and was originally written and published in a church bulletin, much to the chagrin of certain brethren who were either involved in watching the Lord of the Rings movies and rereading the books, or allowing their children to watch the movies and read the books. The sad fact of the whole affair is that the church was a fundamental, unaffiliated Baptist church, and the brethren claimed to be fundamentalists as well. In addition, these individuals were some of the supposedly better taught brethren.

What this does illustrate for certain is the fact that knowledge does not equal obedience. And, just because someone appears to be well taught in one aspect of Bible doctrine, it does not mean that they are understanding of other doctrines taught in the Scriptures.

With these thoughts in mind, please read the following article carefully and thoughtfully, searching out the scriptures

honestly. I am certain of what you will find – that is why this article was written.

Due to recent events the question has arisen:

Can you relate, or illustrate the things of God with fantasy and/or fiction?

Now this is a proper question to address in this time in history, as many believe that it is entirely possible to show the principles and truth of the word of God with situations and stories that have no basis in fact. In short, the stories told are not even remotely true.

However, before beginning let's look at what is already known about the series of books dealing with hobbits, orcs, elves, wizards and the like.

This is what we do know from J.R.R Tolkien himself; that the entire Middle Earth series (The Silmarillion, The Hobbit, and The Lord of the Rings trilogy) were revised by Tolkien to more effectively present Catholic elements and doctrine without revealing that was what he was doing. Moreover, Tolkien used many elements of Norse religion ((This is politely called "mythology." Although I suspect the Norse would have taken much umbrage at calling their religion a myth.)) in the setting and storyline of the books.

The above two things we know for certain. There are sufficient quotes from Tolkien himself in his letters to substantiate this. What this means is that one is reading about and being entertained by false religion, and another gospel. ((Though the following may seem bold, it really is not, it is a simple statement of fact: All false religions present another gospel. That is why they exist. The authors of false religion do not like the true Gospel, and thus set about to "create" another "gospel.")) The question here is: Can this false religion/fantasy/fiction present the truths of God? While we

are at it, let's also ask another question: Why is "mainstream Christianity" so bent on promoting this series, along with other fantasy/fiction works such as *The Lion the Witch and the Wardrobe*, and *The Chronicles of Narnia* as "Christian" writing?

In answering the first question, let's consider another question. This question is of the greatest import, and most germane to the entire issue. *Can you tell the truth with an untruth (or a lie)?* ((The only difference between an "untruth" or something that is false, and a lie, is the intent of the one delivering the false information. An untruth may, or may not be identifiably used for a deception. A lie is always used in the commission of a deception.

However, the above is only man's way of looking at it. It is not the LORD God's way of looking at it. Regardless of the intent, anything that is untrue, is still unrighteous and sin. Moreover, God cannot and will not use it for His purposes. God hates those things that are false.))

Think about it . . .

With the above question in mind, it is imperative to first define some terms with commonly accepted, proper dictionary definitions *in the context of this discussion*. All definitions are from the Oxford English Dictionary of the English Language. Although this will be long, it is essential to one's understanding of the issue at hand.

Fantasy:

3. Delusive imagination, hallucination; the fact or habit of deluding oneself by imaginary perception or reminiscences (*Obs.*)

4. Imagination; the process or the faculty of forming mental representations of things not actually present.

Fiction:

3. The action of feigning or inventing imaginary incidents, existences, states of things, etc., whether for the purpose of deception or otherwise.

4. The species of literature which is concerned with the

narration of imaginary events and the portraiture of imaginary characters; fictitious composition.

5. A supposition known to be at variance with fact, but conventionally accepted for some reason of practical convenience, conformity with traditional usage, decorum, or the like.

Invention:

1. The action, faculty, or manner of inventing.

2. The action of devising, contriving, or making up; contrivance, fabrication.

4. The faculty of inventing or devising; power of mental creation or construction; inventiveness.

6. Something devised; a method of action, etc., contrived by the mind; a device, contrivance, design, plan, scheme.

7. A work or writing as produced by exercise of the mind or imagination; a literary composition. (*Obs*)

8. A fictitious statement or story; a fabrication, fiction, figment.

Truth:

1. The quality of being true.

2. One's faith or loyalty as pledged in a promise or agreement; solemn engagement or promise, a covenant (*Obs*)

3. Faith, trust, confidence.

4. Disposition to speak or act truly or without deceit; truthfulness, veracity, sincerity; formerly sometimes in a wider sense: Honesty, uprightness, righteousness, virtue, integrity.

5. Conformity with fact; agreement with reality; accuracy, correctness, verity (of statement or thought).

6. Agreement with a standard or rule; accuracy, correctness; *spec.* accuracy of position or adjustment.

7. Genuineness, reality, actual existence.

8. True statement or account; that which is in accordance with the fact.

9. True religious belief or doctrine; orthodoxy.

9b. Conduct in accordance with the divine standard; spirituality of life and behavior.

10. That which is true, real, or actual; reality.

11. The fact or facts, the actual state of the case; matter or circumstance as it really is.

12. A true statement or proposition; a point of true

belief; a true doctrine; a fixed or established principle; a verified fact, a reality.

Now, about that last question: In Romans there are two passages found that deal with whether or not we can present (or illustrate) the truth with a falsehood, and grace with sin. ((The principle here is the same.))

For if the truth of God hath more abounded through my lie unto his glory; why yet am I also judged as a sinner? And not rather, (as we be slanderously reported, and as some affirm that we say,) Let us do evil, that good may come? whose damnation is just. *(Romans 3:7-8)*

What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? *(Romans 6:1-2)*

Doesn't the contrast between the truth of God and a lie become more stark, and more discernible the worse the lie? Certainly it does – *but only if you already know the truth*. Moreover, you are still committing sin against God, whom you say you serve.

Can I then say that I make the truth of God more glorious the worse I sin, and the more I lie?

No, absolutely not.

How can one carry the name of the Lord, and all the while smear His name in the mud by association because they think they can still engage in the same wickedness they engaged in before they were "saved."

Why then am I found at fault for my sin? Because sin is still sin. No matter what veneer one attempts to put on it, sin has been, is now, and will always be – sin. Moreover, God hates

sin.

Why don't we just do all manner of wickedness so that the truth and glory of God shines forth to the uttermost? Moreover, why isn't Satan the greatest preacher of the Gospel?

And, why does He state that my damnation is just for this attitude? Because it is not the same as God's attitude. For one to avoid condemnation before God, one must have the same attitude towards sin as God, and be every bit as righteous as God. In other words, one must be in total agreement with God in everything they do.

Of course the short answer to all this is that you cannot make a picket fence white by painting it black. Somehow it just doesn't work. Neither can you brighten a room by turning off all the lights and painting the walls black. And just to beat a dead horse – You cannot arrive at a place by traveling away from it.

The principle is this:

Evil and wickedness will never, never, present the truth of righteousness and the glory of God.

To say that it can, is to call evil good, and good evil. That which is false (a lie) can never present the truth.

Now if one decides to present the truth of God, and proclaim the Gospel by living worldly, enjoying the things of this world and fulfilling our lusts – what are they actually doing? And, what will they be called? The answer is quite plain: They will be perverting the Lord's gospel, and changing it into their own gospel. Thus, the condemnation given in Galatians 1:8-9 will apply to them (or us) as well.

But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said

before, so say I now again, If any *man* preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed. (*Galatians 1:8-9*)

As for the second question which is “And, what will they be called?” Without doubt, “hypocrite” is probably the word that will be most often used.

What does all this have to do with the book “Finding God in the Lord of the Rings” and the newspaper article “Tolkien’s “Lord of the Rings” has foundation in Christianity”? Everything actually. You see, the authors of the book and the article have shown their ignorance of biblical principle in their failure to include certain facts, and as a result have drawn mistaken conclusions.

First, they do not understand the biblical principle presented above: That you cannot tell the truth using that which is false.

Second, they declare that J.R.R. Tolkien was a Christian based upon Tolkien’s own perception of what Christianity is.

Third, they obviously do not take the word of God literally.

Lastly, they do not understand that the one true religion, the pure religion, and the original pure doctrine – *is Christianity*.

1. Beginning at the last point first – The Bible (the right one, the KJV) plainly teaches that the Gospel was preached to Adam after the fall, by Christ Himself as is given in Genesis 3:14-15, 21.

And the LORD God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou *art* cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life: And I will put enmity between thee and

the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel. (*Genesis 3:14-15*)

Unto Adam also and to his wife did the LORD God make coats of skins, and clothed them. (*Genesis 3:21*)

In the above passages note that the enmity spoken of exists expressly between the seed of the serpent and the seed of the woman only. This statement excludes the seed of the man (or 'of Adam') meaning that the conflict spoken of will be between one born of a virgin and those who are the children of the Devil. Moreover, in the following verse (v. 21) the LORD expressly uses animal skins to cloth Adam and Eve instead of any of the other materials that could have been used. This plainly indicates that the LORD God shed blood to cover (or clothe) Adam of Eve.

Furthermore, it was understood plainly by Abel, as Abel testifies to this day in the word of God.

And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the LORD.

And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the LORD had respect unto Abel and to his offering: But unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect. And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell. (*Genesis 4:4-5*)

By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaketh. (*Hebrews 11:4*)

What was it about Abel's offering that was acceptable to God? And Cain's offering that was not? Perhaps it is this parallel passage from Leviticus that makes it clear:

When a ruler hath sinned, and done *somewhat* through ignorance *against* any of the commandments of the LORD his God *concerning things* which should not be done, and is guilty; Or if his sin, wherein he hath sinned, come to his knowledge; he shall bring his offering, a kid of the goats, a male without blemish: And he shall lay his hand upon the head of the goat, and kill it in the place where they kill the burnt offering before the LORD: it *is* a sin offering.

And the priest shall take of the blood of the sin offering with his finger, and put it upon the horns of the altar of burnt offering, and shall pour out his blood at the bottom of the altar of burnt offering. And he shall burn all his fat upon the altar, as the fat of the sacrifice of peace offerings: and the priest shall make an atonement for him as concerning his sin, and it shall be forgiven him. (Leviticus 4:22-26)

This is one of many sacrifices that Israel was required to perform. The primary purpose of these sacrifices are explained in Hebrews, chapter nine:

Now when these things were thus ordained, the priests went always into the first tabernacle, accomplishing the service *of God*. But into the second *went* the high priest alone once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself, and *for* the errors of the people: The Holy Ghost this signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing: Which was a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience; *Which stood* only in meats and drinks, and divers

washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed *on them* until the time of reformation. But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption *for us.* (Hebrews 9:6-12)

All of the above passages of Scripture speak plainly to the fact that Abel's sacrifice of the blood and fat of a lamb was consistent with the picture the LORD wanted presented concerning His sacrifice on the cross in atonement for our sin. This makes Abel a prophet of the LORD and thus sheds light on another passage from Luke, chapter one:

And his father Zacharias was filled with the Holy Ghost, and prophesied, saying, Blessed *be* the Lord God of Israel; for he hath visited and redeemed his people, And hath raised up an horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David; As he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets, which have been since the world began: . . . (Luke 1:67-70)

Which also completes the proof from the Scripture that the gospel has always been the same for everyone, and was preached from the beginning. First, we find it preached by the LORD Himself unto Adam and Eve, and then by Abel unto Cain.

However, we are also shown that Cain rejected the gospel and attempted to substitute his own form of sacrifice and have the LORD accept it. Thus, the first perversion of the gospel was by Cain as the passage from Genesis, chapter four stated:

And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the LORD.

And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his

flock and of the fat thereof. And the LORD had respect unto Abel and to his offering: But unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect. And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell. (*Genesis 4:4-5*)

In so doing, Cain created the first false religion by illustrating the sacrifice of Christ to come as a sacrifice that did not require blood to be shed. In short, Cain denied a basic truth of the gospel – “And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission.” (*Hebrews 9:22*)

With this plainly understood, we can put two other biblical points with it and understand, that if we look hard enough, we can find God in anything, and *all religions have their foundation in Christianity.*

The first thing to factor with Christianity being the one true religion – *that God created everything.* There is no other Creator. Neither man, nor the Devil and his angels, create anything. In the Gospel of John, chapter one, the Scripture is very express about this:

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. (*John 1:1-3*)

All man and the fallen angels can do is pervert that which already exists. Therefore, if we add these elements to one other element then it gives us the complete picture. The last element to add is the fact that *all things were made to show the glory of God.*

The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth

knowledge. *There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard. Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. In them hath he set a tabernacle for the sun, . . . (Psalm 19:1-4)*

These things now made plain, it should be clear that what the authors stated is deceptive. Sure we can “find God in the Lord of the Rings,” just like we can find God in Mormonism, or Catholicism, or Wicca, etc., etc. Yes, we can certainly state that “Lord of the Rings” has a Christian foundation. All false religions do, even Greco-Roman and Norse “mythology.” (Just take a long look at Hinduism, it has some remarkable similarities to Christianity.)

2. The authors and defenders of Tolkien’s works (along with all other “Christian Fiction”) obviously do not take the word of God literally. How do I know this? These are the very same people that state that there is no difference between the Bible versions. Yes, James Dobson and Focus on the Family, Jim Ware, World Magazine, et al., will declare that the NIV, NASB, NKJV, NCV, NJB, etc., etc. are all the same. For this to be true one must make the Scripture into allegory. You know – Lazarus and the rich man – that didn’t really happen. The pool at Bethesda – it never really existed. Literal seven day (24 hour day) creation – not really, etc., etc.

3. The proponents of Tolkien’s works also promote him as a Christian. This is based upon Tolkien’s own claim of being a Christian. J.R.R. Tolkien had a flawed perception of true Christianity. Tolkien himself stated in one of his letters, specifically Letter #142:

“The Lord of the Rings is of course a fundamentally religious and Catholic work; unconsciously so at first, but consciously in the revision. That is why I have not put in, or have cut out, practically all references to anything like ‘religion’, to cults or practices, in the imaginary world. For the

religious element is absorbed into the story and the symbolism."

And from Letter #195:

"Actually I am a Christian, and indeed a Roman Catholic, so that I do not expect 'history' to be anything but a 'long defeat' – though it contains (and in a legend may contain more clearly and movingly) some samples or glimpses of final victory."

What would cause the apologists for Tolkien to say that Catholicism is Christianity? It is because their own perception of Christianity and what a Christian is, is horribly flawed. James Dobson is a Nazarene, and still holds firmly to Nazarene doctrine – especially the doctrine of "saved by grace, kept by works." It is not any different for Jim Ware who attended Fuller Theological Seminary. FTS is totally ecumenical, so much so that FTS has no difficulty preparing men and women for positions in the ministry of both Calvinist and Arminist denominations. Jim Ware sees no problem with this. Apparently, Jim Ware sees no problem in "misquoting" either, as he misquoted Tolkien by stating "The Lord of the Rings is of course a fundamentally religious and *Christian* work;" instead of the actual "*Catholic* work;" in a Focus on the Family, Family magazine article supporting the Lord of the Rings.

To be plain – Catholicism is NOT Christianity. There is no part of Catholic doctrine that is Christian.

4. Finally, you cannot tell the truth with a lie. I know many point to that verse in Romans that declares "Yea, let God be true and every man a liar" and yet we are flawed vessels carrying the truth. Seems contradictory doesn't it? But is it really? What is the difference between the Lost and the Saved? I think the apostle Paul expressed it best (given him by the

Holy Ghost) in Galatians 2:20 which states "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, **but Christ liveth in me**: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." And again in Romans 7:25 "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then **with the mind I myself serve the law of God**; but with the flesh the law of sin." The great and fundamental difference that empowers us to carry the truth of the Gospel is that our soul has the righteousness of God; thus we can carry the truth and not be liars. The lost do not have this. Those that depend upon their works for their salvation do not have this. They are altogether liars. So, the principle holds true even here: You cannot tell the truth with a lie.

Should we then listen to those that continue to claim that "God" is presented in such books as The Hobbit, The Lion, The Witch, and The Wardrobe, and the Chronicles of Narnia?

A simple, to the point answer is: No. But the reason for the answer should be well understood. In Galatians 1:8-9 it is stated: "But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed." Now these verses are not talking about the newly saved, or recently saved, untaught Christian. Rather, these verses refer to those that have studied the issue and believe that salvation is not secure in Christ, and preach the same. That same person is willing to defend that position *based upon scripture*. With that understanding, consider the following excerpt from a letter I received from Dr. James Dobson's personal assistant concerning his view on Eternal Security. The letter is dated February 29, 2000.

"We welcome your inquiry pertaining to Dr. Dobson's beliefs on eternal security. In response, Dr. Dobson holds to the classic Arminian view—that is, he believes God never violates

the free will of the individual. Dr. Dobson feels that the Lord does not force people to accept Him, nor will He lock them into an earlier commitment if they subsequently choose deliberately and willfully to disobey His known will.

Also, while Dr. Dobson does not affirm the doctrine of eternal security, he is at the same time confident that our loving Heavenly Father will not banish us from fellowship with Him for our mistakes, human frailties, faults, and failings. God's forgiveness for sin is one of the foundation stones of the gospel message. Still, this does not change Dr. Dobson's conviction that the choice is ultimately ours. He believes it is possible for an individual to remove himself from the grace of God, and exit by the door through which he originally entered—the will. This means that, in Dr. Dobson's view, it is possible for a born-again Christian to shake his fist in God's face and say in essence, "I will have my own way!" When that occurs, "There remaineth no more sacrifice for sin." This scripture, which is quoted below in its larger context, is one of at least fifty references that may be cited in support of the theological perspective to which Dr. Dobson ascribes:"

This then is the crux of the issue as to why we should not listen to such people. They are accursed of God for their perversion of the truth. This is the same problem that exists with J.R.R. Tolkien, C.S. Lewis and many others. Sadly, they do not know the Lord Jesus Christ, but rather have believed "another Jesus" . . .

For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or *if* ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received, or another gospel, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with *him*. (*II Corinthians 11:4*)

. . . and followed the false light.

For such *are* false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore *it is* no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works. (*II Corinthians 11:13-15*)

Which means they are blinded by Satan concerning the truth, and speak from that blindness.

But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them. (*II Corinthians 4:3-4*)

So what should we do? Interestingly enough, the Lord has covered all the bases, as usual. You know, it is manifestly impossible to stay on task when one's mind is elsewhere. It is also impossible to be engaged seriously, about serious issues when one's mind is filled with fantastic junk. Two verses come to mind as good, solid admonitions for one to follow. (and they have everything to do with the definitions above)

Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things. (*Philippians 4:8*)

Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: (*1 Peter 5:8*)

Finis

The Lord of the Rings and The Hobbit

Are they innocent, harmless books?

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The following is the first of two letters to brethren concerning the dangers of fiction and fantasy books. Specifically, this addresses J.R.R. Tolkien's Middle Earth series.

Who could hate a hobbit? What is wrong with the good wizard Gandalf? And, why do you hate elves?

Perhaps, these are not the questions to ask when asking whether or not the popular series of books about the fictional Middle Earth is actually a good thing for anyone to read, let alone bible-believing, born-again children of God.

Perhaps a better question to ask is:

How do we, as the children of the living God, judge the acceptability of books, movies, etc, etc.... Of course, the answer is virtually axiomatic: Why, the Word of God, of course.

If that is true, then let us look at how J. R. R. Tolkien's works on Middle Earth compare to the admonition of the Lord.

1. Most people do not know that the popular (a virtual cultic

following) series of books about the doings of Middle Earth in the Third War of the Rings, does not begin with the book *The Hobbit*. Instead, the story begins in another book, much longer and more difficult to read, called *The Silmarillion*.

The Silmarillion is the ground of the entire series. Without this book, the series has no real beginning, and no real meaning. The setting and seriousness of *The Hobbit*, and *The Lord of the Rings* is largely lost outside of *The Silmarillion*. But this book appears as virtually another religion to almost everyone, including the lost. One reviewer described it as “*A grim, tragic, powerful book, shot through with heroism and hope ... its power is almost that of mysticism.*” ((*Toronto Globe and Mail*, date not cited))

Of course there is a reason for the power that approaches mysticism. If the reviewer had fully understood the following information presented in the book and repeated on the Wikipedia website, it would have been clear that it is mysticism.

“*The Silmarillion* is a collection of Tolkien’s works, standardized and published by his son Christopher, posthumously. It contains these five pieces:

1. *The Ainulindalë* – the creation of Eä, Tolkien’s universe.
2. *The Valaquenta* – the Valar? and Maiar?, the deities and angels.
3. *The Quenta Silmarillion* – the history of the events before and during First Age.
4. *The Akallabêth* – the history of the Second Age.
5. *Of the Rings of Power and the Third Age*.

The Silmarillion is a very complex work, employing an extremely wide array of themes, that originate in lore of countries all over Europe, but not adhering to any of them. Thus, the title of Eru Ilúvatar (One who is Father of All) is

clearly a borrowed from the Norse mythology; the story of Túrin Turambar is very similar to a motive from Kalevala; and Númenor is obviously reminiscent of Atlantis (in fact, one of the names Tolkien gave that land was Atalantë)." ((Wikipedia website: www.wikipedia.com))

With such detail and arrangement as an alternate creation account, holy places, the reason for evil, gods and how one must attain peace in the afterlife, quite clearly the entire series beginning with *The Silmarillion*, and including *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy, is nothing less than a false religion.

2. The entire Middle Earth series employs such creatures as immortal elves, ogres, wizards, mortal men, dragons, and a particular type of physical demon (orcs). Of the above mentioned, only ogres, the demons, and dragons are always evil. Men, wizards (a magican) and elves can be either good or evil. However, elves never lose their immortality unless they willingly give it up – *no matter what they do*.

So what is wrong with this?

First, the Lord commanded that Israel should not suffer a witch to live (this includes wizards being simply male witches).

Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live. (*Exodus 22:18*)

Moreover, the Lord stated expressly that witchcraft and rebellion are equally abominable sins.

For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, he hath also rejected thee from being king. (*1 Samuel 15:23*)

So far there is no evidence that LORD is going to change His

mind. In fact, we can be certain He will not.

Second, nowhere in Scripture (a true Book) are we told that anyone, man or angel, can do anything they want without consequence before God. Yes, lost or saved, even the most inane, idle word we may speak will be accounted for before the LORD.

But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned. (*Matthew 12:36-37*)

Third, we are never led to believe in the Scripture that the end justifies the means. If it did, then the Lord Jesus Christ would have never died on the cross for us. Yet, in the entire series on Middle Earth, over and over again deception, outright lies and murder are used for a “good” end, and justified because of the outcome.

Fourth, The entire series is no different than Dungeons and Dragons. The exact same characters, and character types appear in D & D. It simply depends on whose set you buy.

3. Okay, it is just fiction, and I take it that way. It cannot harm me.

That would be nice – if it were true. It simply is not. Going outside of the Lord’s commandments and playing around with things that the Lord said not to look upon, nor touch; opens one up to the devil in a very serious way – *especially when it comes to witchcraft*. The battlefield wherein we frequently fight is the mind. If the mind is turned away from the reality of this spiritual war in which we are participants, the devil has the greater advantage. No, he cannot possess a saved person, but he can, and will, keep the mind filled with ungodly thoughts and attempt to build a resistance to the things of God, so that the person does not ever properly serve

the Lord. Moreover, failure to follow the Lord's will in such matters can result in the Lord allowing Satan to torment one mentally and physically so that a lesson may be learned.

But the Spirit of the LORD departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the LORD troubled him. (*I Samuel 16:14*)

For I verily, as absent in body, but present in spirit, have judged already, as though I were present, concerning him that hath so done this deed, In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus. (*I Corinthians 5:3-5*) (*Somehow, I fail to see this as a desirable way to learn.*)

Additionally, if the mind is filled with such things that strengthen the flesh, and focus one on the things of the world – then one starves and weakens the mind of the soul so that the victories more frequently go to the flesh. The end result of that is a bad witness, or no witness at all. This is expressly why we are commanded to put away the things of the flesh and the world, and dwell upon heavenly things, right things, and things that speak of the truth.

If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. (*Colossians 3:1*)

Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things. (*Philippians 4:8*)

Incidentally, isn't it somewhat of a contradiction for someone who has been born in the truth and of the truth, and knows reality to engage in fantasy (which is by definition not reality and a lie), and fiction (again, a lie), and in escapism (mentally opting out of reality)? If someone is born-again of God, then shouldn't they love things that are true? After all, the following passages of Scripture speak clearly to the fact that God is not about untruth, nor does He abide it. Moreover, He wants His children to set aside such things and focus on the Lord who saved them, rather than on things of fantasy.

In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began; (*Titus 1:2*)

Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath: That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us: (*Hebrews 6:17-18*)

Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. (*Hebrews 12:1-2*)

4. J. R. R. Tolkien did not intend to create a false religion.

Whether J. R. R. Tolkien truly understood what he was doing, only the LORD God really knows. However, the understanding of the person involved in perpetrating the evil is rarely, if

ever, the issue. The real issue is that there is a real creation, a real reason for evil and wickedness, and a real righteous God of all that insures that all men know that He is there, and what He requires. This is plainly stated in Romans, chapter 1:

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness; Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse: Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. (*Romans 1:18-21*)

In closing I would like put forth one final thought for your consideration. I have read the entire series on Middle Earth (even *The Silmarillion*). I did it long before I was saved. However, the power of the books is such that I kept them for years. It was not until I was saved that I put them away – but I could not destroy them. It took approximately a year to come to the point of destroying them. I consider myself very fortunate, and blessed of God that I was able to do so. I have had many friends and acquaintances that Tolkien's series of books were instrumental in getting them involved in Dungeons and Dragons, and then into witchcraft, and/or drugs. The power and pull that Satan has through these books is tremendous. It is a "nice escape" that is literally playing with fire.

Finis

Hypocrisy

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In 1948, the United States Air Force formed the Strategic Air Command for the purpose of nuclear deterrence. The weapon then available was the long-range bomber. The barely year-old Air Force chose a particularly able man to command this new arm of the Air Force. That man was General Curtis E. LeMay.

When General LeMay took charge of the fledgling command, one of his first actions was to evaluate this force in the light of reality. The question asked of every Bomb Group and Wing in the command was "Can you find and destroy the targets given you?"

General LeMay was no stranger to the concept and practice of heavy bombardment. It was General LeMay that developed the highly effective "Combat Box" formation to provide protection to the B-17 and B-24 formations during daylight raids over Europe. He was also responsible for turning around a totally ineffective bombing campaign against Japan. Transferred to the Pacific theater after his success in Europe, he totally changed the tactics and weapons used against Japanese cities. As a result, incredible devastation was visited upon the Japanese homeland. His tactics resulted in a firestorm that consumed 25 square miles of Tokyo in one raid in a single night. When his bomber formations visited other Japanese cities the results were similar. General LeMay understood war, particularly air war. He also understood something else. Having been in the military since 1928, he understood that how a unit performs on a formal inspection with advance notice, is

not necessarily a reflection of the true abilities and condition of that unit. Indeed, unit commanders are not above "whitewashing" a unit in preparation for an upcoming inspection. For the military this can, and does have devastating consequences when a unit is called into action without warning. Often, units cannot, and do not perform well in combat because they do not practice what they preach. Because General LeMay knew this, he was determined that this would not be the case with America's first line of defense.

Thus the general's first command to his units was to perform a mock bombing raid on a target located in Dayton, Ohio. This seemed simple enough. However, not a single aircrew either found the target, or arrived on time. All crews were either off target by miles, or were late over the target. Both of which are a death knell to bombing effectiveness. Not a single crew, SAC-wide, flew the mission as briefed.

This did not please the General, nevertheless he had a solution: Place the entire command on a war footing. Yes, every single day of the year, at every SAC base, every individual would carry out their duties as if there were an active war in-progress. The reality of what this meant hit home when, for the first time ever, units were subject to no-notice inspections. Moreover, the inspections began whenever the inspection team arrived on-base. If that meant it began at 3:00 AM, then so be it. Aircrews were also commanded to fly at all hours, every day, in all weather.

Within just a few months the results began to show. Units that could not perform the mission before, were now able to find targets – on-time. Instead of "whitewashed" inspection results, the true condition of each and every unit was known. In the end, General LeMay's efforts paid huge dividends to the United States. The Soviet Union could not, and would not match the combat readiness of the Strategic Air Command. The Soviets were never able to be assured that they stood a chance of beginning a nuclear conflict with the United States without

incredible devastation being visited upon them by SAC.

What was the secret of General LeMay's success? Is it that military members have no choice but to comply with directives given from above? Not hardly. Even in the military, people rebel against authority. Not outwardly, rather in small ways that normally go undetected except under the stress of critical inspections, or combat. The secret of General LeMay's success is found in one thing and one thing only. He practiced what he preached.

In an interview with the Public Broadcasting System, Lt. General James Edmundson made the following comment concerning General LeMay's success.

"He was about the only man that had the knowledge of bombardment operation, the leadership ability to put together an organization like SAC [Strategic Air Command] and make it work, and the personal honor and dignity to do it properly, for the good of his country, and to instill the people that worked for him – instill in them the agreement with what he's doing, the understanding of what he's doing..."

In short, General LeMay was not a hypocrite. One can have great ability and knowledge, and yet not be followed. One can be the best organizer that the world has ever seen, and yet no one will follow them. One can be placed in a leadership role and those under them commanded to follow. In the military this happens all the time. Yet those in leadership positions are not respected and willingly followed because they do not practice what they preach to their subordinates. General LeMay believed in, and practiced no-notice preparedness. It is often recorded in SAC that he never sought to circumvent the regulations, no matter how inconvenient they were to him personally. The following was taken from a webpage dedicated to SAC and General LeMay.

"Be prepared. Get something straight, he told them: "We are

at war now." The security on SAC bases was so tight that LeMay's own wife was once held at bayonet point. She had ventured into her back yard without her ID."

Having been in SAC for 5 years, I believe it. Even as late as 1991, the effects of General LeMay's leadership on Strategic Air Command during its formative years were still being felt. Of all the major commands in the Air Force, SAC still had a warrior mentality.

When I consider this, I think of the Rechabites written of in the 35th chapter of Jeremiah. Where the Rechabites answered Jeremiah's challenge as given from the LORD God.

And I set before the sons of the house of the Rechabites pots full of wine, and cups, and I said unto them, Drink ye wine. But they said, We will drink no wine: for Jonadab the son of Rechab our father commanded us, saying, Ye shall drink no wine, neither ye, nor your sons for ever: Neither shall ye build house, nor sow seed, nor plant vineyard, nor have any: but all your days ye shall dwell in tents; that ye may live many days in the land where ye be strangers. Thus have we obeyed the voice of Jonadab the son of Rechab our father in all that he hath charged us, to drink no wine all our days, we, our wives, our sons, nor our daughters; Nor to build houses for us to dwell in: neither have we vineyard, nor field, nor seed: But we have dwelt in tents, and have obeyed, and done according to all that Jonadab our father commanded us. (*Jeremiah 35:5-10*)

It strikes me that Jonadab was not a hypocrite, and that he trained up his children properly. Those children believed because it became real to them through the life of their father. As a result, they lived what thy were taught. It is the only explanation that can account for the continuance of

the Rechabites in Jeremiah 35.

So that we may not get confused, hypocrisy needs to be defined. The Oxford Dictionary of the English Language gives the following definition:

“From Old French ypocrisie, Latin hypocrisis and Greek ὑπόκρισις, the acting part on a stage, feigning, pretence. .

*.
Assuming of a false appearance of virtue or goodness with dissimulation of real character or inclinations, esp. in respect of religious life or beliefs; hence in a general sense, dissimulation, pretence, sham.”*

Thus hypocrisy cannot be the incidental failings of an individual, but rather it is a practiced character trait. It must be, by definition, a continued pattern of action in contrast to the avowed statements of the individual. This, of course, leaves the LORD God completely out of the picture when it comes to responsibility for the fall of others. Only God is righteous, and never to be found at fault for turning someone away. It is not so with us. We cannot say “Even the Lord had the angels turn against Him.” and use that example to say we are not at fault. This is worse than an “apples to oranges” comparison. Do we even come close to being like the LORD God? Of course not. Therefore we cannot say we play no role in someone being turned against the Lord, of whom we say we represent. The best we can say, if we are honest, is “I am not sure of the part I have played in someone else’s rebellion.”

Finally, in considering General LeMay, I cannot but be drawn to the conclusion that he held appearance to be nothing – except that it came out of real substance. General Curtis LeMay understood modern warfare and the high cost of being hypocritical when it came to readiness.

Do we, as the Lord’s children truly understand spiritual warfare and the effect of our testimony?

And the lord commended the unjust steward, because he had done wisely: for the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light. (*Luke 16:8*)

Finis

When “I’m Sorry” Isn’t Sufficient

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In every person’s life there are things that occur that are the result of the actions, unintentional or otherwise, of those around them. We can even be affected by the decisions and actions of those quite far removed from us. There are numerous instances of this in the Scripture. One such incident we are all familiar with involved Jonah and his disobedience to the Lord.

Now the word of the LORD came unto Jonah the son of Amittai, saying, Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry against it; for their wickedness is come up before me. But Jonah rose up to flee unto Tarshish from the presence of the LORD, and went down to Joppa; and he found a ship going to Tarshish: so he paid the fare thereof, and went down into it, to go with them unto Tarshish from the presence of the LORD.

But the LORD sent out a great wind into the sea, and there was a mighty tempest in the sea, so that the

ship was like to be broken. Then the mariners were afraid, and cried every man unto his god, and cast forth the wares that *were* in the ship into the sea, to lighten *it* of them. But Jonah was gone down into the sides of the ship; and he lay, and was fast asleep. So the shipmaster came to him, and said unto him, What meanest thou, O sleeper? arise, call upon thy God, if so be that God will think upon us, that we perish not. And they said every one to his fellow, Come, and let us cast lots, that we may know for whose cause this evil *is* upon us. So they cast lots, and the lot fell upon Jonah. Then said they unto him, Tell us, we pray thee, for whose cause this evil *is* upon us; What *is* thine occupation? and whence comest thou? what *is* thy country? and of what people *art* thou? And he said unto them, I *am* an Hebrew; and I fear the LORD, the God of heaven, which hath made the sea and the dry *land*. Then were the men exceedingly afraid, and said unto him, Why hast thou done this? For the men knew that he fled from the presence of the LORD, because he had told them.

Then said they unto him, What shall we do unto thee, that the sea may be calm unto us? for the sea wrought, and was tempestuous. And he said unto them, Take me up, and cast me forth into the sea; so shall the sea be calm unto you: for I know that for my sake this great tempest *is* upon you. Nevertheless the men rowed hard to bring *it* to the land; but they could not: for the sea wrought, and was tempestuous against them. Wherefore they cried unto the LORD, and said, We beseech thee, O LORD, we beseech thee, let us not perish for this man's life, and lay not upon us innocent blood: for thou, O LORD, hast done as it pleased thee. So they took up Jonah, and cast him forth into the sea: and the sea ceased from her raging. Then the men feared the LORD exceedingly,

and offered a sacrifice unto the LORD, and made vows. (*Jonah 1:1-16*)

There are many things we could say about the above passage from the Book of Jonah. We could attempt to justify Jonah's actions by pointing out that it is entirely likely some of the men on the ship were saved as result of what happened, which would not have happened had Jonah simply gone to Nineveh like he was supposed to. We could also say that Jonah's preaching in Nineveh was made more believable by his appearance, having come from being in the whale's belly for three days.

However, both of these justifications ignore the fact that Jonah directly disobeyed the Lord, and in so doing caused a number of other people to suffer the loss of the fruits of their labor. Not only that, Jonah's disobedience imperiled the lives of the entire crew of the ship. I wonder what transpired when the ship finally returned to port and reported to the owners of the cargo they were carrying as to the events that occurred and why. Perhaps the owners of the goods that were tossed overboard were not so understanding? I also wonder – would they have accepted Jonah's "I'm sorry", or "I apologize"? Would they have ever believed Jonah (or anyone else) if the Gospel were presented to them? After all, it would be real immediate in their minds that a "man of God" caused the loss of their labors.

Upon this, I am reminded of the time I worked as an Avionics Guidance & Control Supervisor on the flightline at Castle AFB. I worked KC-135 aircraft, and was responsible for the Instrument, Inertial Navigation, Autopilot & Flight Stabilization, and Compass systems of the aircraft. One of the most pressing issues emphasized was doing the job right. As a supervisor, it was imperative to impress upon my people the seriousness of the maintenance we performed. After all, when things go wrong at 35,000 ft. there is no place to "pull over" and check it out. More than once, when reading of an incident that resulted in the loss of an aircraft and crew, I would

find that the cause was the result of some maintenance technician's failure to correctly perform maintenance on the system that failed – and people died.

One of the things I discovered many years ago, was that there are many times when "I'm sorry" or "I apologize" just doesn't cut it.

"*I'm sorry*" doesn't cut it when someone dies as a result of something you did and should not have done, or, did not do and should have done. "I'm sorry" won't bring them back. "I'm sorry" won't fill the empty space in the lives of their family and won't replace the head of the home you just killed through negligence.

"*I'm sorry*" won't cut it when someone is injured as a result of our actions. It also won't restore them to full health either. There are many other things we can think of that "I'm sorry" won't fix once the damage is done.

You know, Jonah's example is only the mildest of examples of what "I'm sorry" wouldn't fix in the Scriptures. If we consider Achan, Absalom, the children of Israel in the Wilderness . . . What is it stated in the Psalm?

He rained flesh also upon them as dust, and feathered fowls like as the sand of the sea: And he let *it* fall in the midst of their camp, round about their habitations. So they did eat, and were well filled: for he gave them their own desire; They were not estranged from their lust. But while their meat was yet in their mouths, The wrath of God came upon them, and slew the fattest of them, and smote down the chosen *men* of Israel. For all this they sinned still, and believed not for his wondrous works.
(*Psalms 78:27-32*)

I wonder: How many children went to sleep that night in the camp of Israel without one, or both their parents? Even if

their parents could say “I’m sorry,” it was too late.

Even so, what about us? Do we consider the decisions we make and the resulting effects they will have upon those around us? What about the lost that see us and know we are “Christians”? Will “I’m sorry” cut it when they are in Hell because they saw no difference between us and the world – and thus rejected the Gospel because our message was not believable?

Will “I’m sorry” be sufficient when we aid and abet someone’s rebellion against God, and it results in their destruction?

Will “I’m sorry” be an appropriate answer before the throne of God when we are faced with the indisputable fact that we would not be burdened for the souls of those around us? You know, we can say we’re burdened all day long. But, if we never get out and present the Gospel to those around us, what we say is meaningless. What counts is what we do, not what we say.

Will “I’m sorry” work when we are confronted by the Lord at His throne concerning all the times he convicted us and rebuked us about our sin – and we ignored it, brushed it off, or got angry about it?

I am not saying that there is no forgiveness with God. Of a certainty there is. However, there are sure consequences for our decisions and subsequent actions. We are not at liberty to do as we please – that is license. We are surely at liberty to live godly lives and present the truth of the Lord’s kingdom in a believable manner. After all, we are reminded that we are not our own, but the Lord’s:

What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost *which is* in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s (*I Corinthians 6:19-20*)

I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet

not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me. (*Galatians 2:20*)

Which brings to the forefront of my mind why I am continually reminded that while I worked on the flightline it was of the utmost importance to me that I never be responsible for the loss of, or damage to an aircraft or aircrew. How much more so should I be concerned for the eternal destiny of the souls of those around me? As it is written: "And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment:" (*Hebrews 9:27*) Which is more important, how well an airplane flies, or where someone goes when they die?

This also raises another interesting point to consider: Jonah had his reason for refusing to do the Lord's will (granted, it wasn't valid): I wonder; what are our reasons for refusing to do the Lord's will?

And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil, that he had said that he would do unto them; and he did *it* not. But it displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he was very angry. And he prayed unto the LORD, and said, I pray thee, O LORD, was not this my saying, when I was yet in my country? Therefore I fled before unto Tarshish: for I knew that thou *art* a gracious God, and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repentest thee of the evil. (*Jonah 3:10-4:1-2*)

It is obvious, Jonah hated the people of Nineveh and wanted to see them destroyed. Do we hate those around us, or are we just too wrapped up in ourselves to see the lost all about us?

Brethren, what good is "I'm sorry" when

someone is in Hell?

Finis

Asymmetrical Warfare

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Asymmetrical Warfare is a term used to describe war between forces of disparate capabilities, tactics, and strategy. There are inherent problems with this type of warfare. Somalia was a case of asymmetric warfare, as is Afghanistan. The war in Vietnam involved both symmetric and asymmetric war depending upon the location. In North Vietnam, the war was symmetric. In South Vietnam the war was asymmetric.

Even though philosophies (world-views) drive war, the resolution of some wars are more dependent upon the ideas that drive them than other wars. Speaking from the world's point of view, this is how it appears. In reality we know that God determines the outcome of war. However, it is profitable to look at the "whys" of the failures and successes in the wars of this world as it assists in understanding the spiritual war in which we are engaged.

The war we fight is an asymmetrical war. Even from a spiritual point of view the war is asymmetrical as the LORD is infinitely more powerful and capable than Satan. However, the most significant difference is in the tactics and strategies of the two sides. In both the physical and spiritual realms this difference is very apparent – if one cares to look.

- – The end, or sum of the LORD's work is to recover that which was lost and restore a righteous (and thus perfect) creation.
- – The end of Satan's work is to prove the LORD unrighteous and thus gain victory over the LORD.
- – God's methods are always righteous and the LORD remains holy throughout.
- – Satan's methods always utilize deception.

On the earth the battle is primarily about two things:

- – The truth of the LORD's kingdom, especially salvation by grace through faith.
- – The souls of men that are to be won by that truth.

When it is stated in the scripture "For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) (*2 Corinthians 10:3-4*) this does not mean that the aspect of the way we live our lives is not important. Rather, it is to state that the means of defeating the influence of demonic forces in our lives, is spiritual rather than physical. But, the means of testifying to men is still physical and is just as important an aspect of this war. It is stated in James 2:17-18:

Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works. (*James 2:17-18*)

A prime example of this is a statement I could make concerning worldly warfare: "There has never been a logistics (supply) facility that has won a battle." Now on its face, this is a true statement. However, the reality is far different. By examining the role in logistics in the world's wars, one will come to an entirely different conclusion. Upon examination,

one would say: "There has never been a battle won without logistics – and good logistics at that."

In other words, it is all well and fine that you pray, and that you pray a lot. However, the verse states "Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." (*James 5:16*)

There are several things to examine in this verse. First, the prayer must be "effectual" which means that it has effects, and the desired ones at that. To be effective with the LORD there are prerequisites. One of those is John 14:15 where the Lord Jesus Christ stated "If ye love me, keep my commandments." If one does this, the LORD promises the following:

He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him.

And:

Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him. He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings: and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent me. (*John 14:21, 23-24*)

How can one be effective with the LORD, if one does not keep the LORD's commandments? One cannot keep the commandments of the Lord any way they want (nor the ones they want). Rather, one must keep the commandments the way the Lord specifies.

Secondly, the prayer must be "fervent." That is, having great intensity. To do that, one must be burdened, and greatly so. Else, the question could be asked: "Is it really that

important?"

Lastly, one must be "righteous." Now we like to fall back on pet verses that state that our flesh is not righteous. Therefore, one cannot expect to do righteous things like one should. However, the soul has been made righteous: Thus the LORD will hear.

Is it really right to have that point of view?

Not according to scripture.

Yes, it is true that the flesh is not righteous, and neither can it be on this earth. Yes, the soul of the believer has been made righteous as well. It is the automatic conclusion that is drawn that is not accurate. Just as there are times that a parent will not hear an unruly child, the Lord will not hear the prayer of his child because the child refuses to do as the Lord commands.

What was it Paul stated concerning the flesh?

"But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway."
(1 Corinthians 9:27)

This clearly indicates that the LORD's use for Paul was dependent upon his spirit ruling over his flesh. Is it any different with us? Incidentally, when the word "use" is involved, it does include the LORD's hearing of our prayers as well. In Romans 8:11-13, Paul clarifies the subjection of the flesh.

But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you. Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live

after the flesh. For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live. (*Romans 8:11-13*)

And again in Romans 6:19-22:

I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness. For when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness. What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things is death. But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life. (*Romans 6:19-22*)

Thus, one is to conquer the flesh. Not that one would not sin, but that one rules over their flesh with all diligence.

If one has not done the above listed things; what good is prayer? Not much, as the LORD will not hear the disobedient. What was it that is written in the book of James?

Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts. (*James 4:3*)

Assuredly, if one asks in the flesh, one will ask amiss. Moreover, if one has not subdued their flesh, the flesh will stifle the spirit.

Thus the element of outward appearance and righteous living does not "win" spiritual battles in the way one thinks of. Rather, like logistics is to the world's warfare, holy living is to the spiritual war we fight. Subduing the flesh and living a separated life are just as important as prayer, though they are not "offensive" weapons. In the asymmetrical

war we are engaged in, there are many things that do not appear to have a use, or may even appear as impediments when not properly examined and considered. However, without those things being properly regarded, and attended to, we lose battle after battle in this war, and will not understand why.

Finis