

(Cont. from pg. 3) All that remains is accounting for casualties. Our spiritual struggles should be thought of as minor skirmishes that (while vitally important to our spiritual lives) will not effect the final outcome. What remains to be determined is who is on what side. Imagine that you were a Nazi or Japanese soldier who had fought against the Allied forces and yet you were given a chance to switch sides *after the war was over*. Certainly, the wise soul who recognized that they were at the mercy of their conqueror would jump at such a chance. In a real way, that is exactly the chance that we are given. If we will recognize our own enmity against God,



caused by our own sin, and choose to “switch sides” we can be on the victorious side even though we formerly took up arms against the King of Heaven! The war is over, the only question is which side are we on?

By Kyle Pope

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Faithful Sayings

Olsen Park Church of Christ

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Services

Sunday: 9:30 a.m.
10:20 a.m.
6:00 p.m.
Wednesday: 7:00 p.m.

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Charles Kelley
Pat Ledbetter

Deacons:

Dean Bowers
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The War Is Over!

For sometime it had been looming on the horizon. Even though Americans of the 1930's and 1940's didn't want to be involved in wars in Europe and Asia it was inevitable. Our hesitancy was certainly understandable. Having just come out of the Depression and a only a few years before that “The War to End All Wars” - World War I, no American was eager to involve our country in another conflict. Yet, on December 7, 1941 when Japan bombed Pearl Harbor it suddenly became evident that the oceans which separated us from the war were not enough to keep the “Axis Powers” (as the

German and Japanese alliance were called) from threatening our own freedom. On that day and American involvement in World War II began. I suppose it is simply human nature to display such hesitancy. At times this is probably the most reasonable and prudent course; after all war is not something to be glorified or desired. Yet, the frightening thing is that if such (Cont. on pg. 2)





(Cont. from pg. 1) hesitancy is taken too far it can cause one to wait until defense is impossible. What would the world have become if America had never become involved in World War II? What would have happened if Hitler had been successful in achieving his dream of establishing his 1000 year empire he called "The Third Reich?" One shutter to imagine.

As Christians much of our work involves alerting people to the spiritual warfare that we face in this life. We seek to warn non-Christians that rejection of Christ leaves them in a state of "enmity against God" (Romans 8:7, NKJV). We warn Christians that every day of our lives we are exposed to the "fiery darts of the wicked one" (Ephesians 6:16). Our hope is that by alerting people to this spiritual battle they will take up spiritual arms without hesitation before defense becomes impossible.

As we engage in this effort, I'm afraid that sometimes we fail to recognize one important aspect of this spiritual struggle. While the Bible does tell us that we individually engage in battles, in the broader view the fact is that the war is already over and Satan has lost! The book of Hebrews tells us that Jesus shared our humanity - "**that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil**" (2:14). In John's visions in the book of Revelation this victory is described (in part). The Holy Spirit tells us that - "**war broke out in heaven**" against the "**dragon and his angels**" (12:7). The text identifies this "dragon" as Satan and tells us they "**did not prevail, nor was a place found for them in heaven any longer**" (12:8,9). Because of this the text declares "**...Now salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night, has been cast down**" (12:10). This is a victory for all the forces of Christ. They were victorious because "**they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not**

love their lives to the death" (12:11). When Jesus overcame death He offered to us the way that we can escape our own slavery to sin and death.

This same point is made in other passages as well. In the gospel of Luke, after Jesus sent out the seventy and they returned having cast out demons, He proclaims - "**...I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven**" (10:18). This doesn't seem to refer to some ancient fall in the past but to the spiritual victory that was accomplished as Christ's purpose was fulfilled at the time. In the gospel of John as Jesus promises the coming of the Holy Spirit, He declares "**the ruler of the world is judged**" (16:11). As the hour approached for His death, the defeat of Satan was drawing closer. Finally, in Paul's letters to the Ephesians and to the Colossians the Holy Spirit tells us what Christ's death accomplished in the heavenly places. His death placed Jesus at the right hand of the Father (Ephesians 1:20). It exalted Him above all heavenly and earthly authority (Ephesians 1:20). It put all things under His feet (Ephesians 1:22). It reconciled all earthly and heavenly things unto Himself "**having made peace through the blood of His cross**" (Colossians

1:20). In simple terms, the war is over and Christ has won.

Is this to say that Satan can no longer tempt us or threaten our safety? Not at all. Peter describes Satan as a "**lion seeking whom he may devour**" (I Peter 5:8). At the end of World War II stories are told of Japanese soldiers on islands in the Pacific who had not received word of the Japanese surrender. They continued fighting ignorant of the fact that they had been defeated. They posed just as serious a threat to the Allied troops as they had during the war. The difference was that all hope of any real victory was taken from them - it was just a matter of time. In the same way Satan has lost.

(Cont. on pg. 4)

