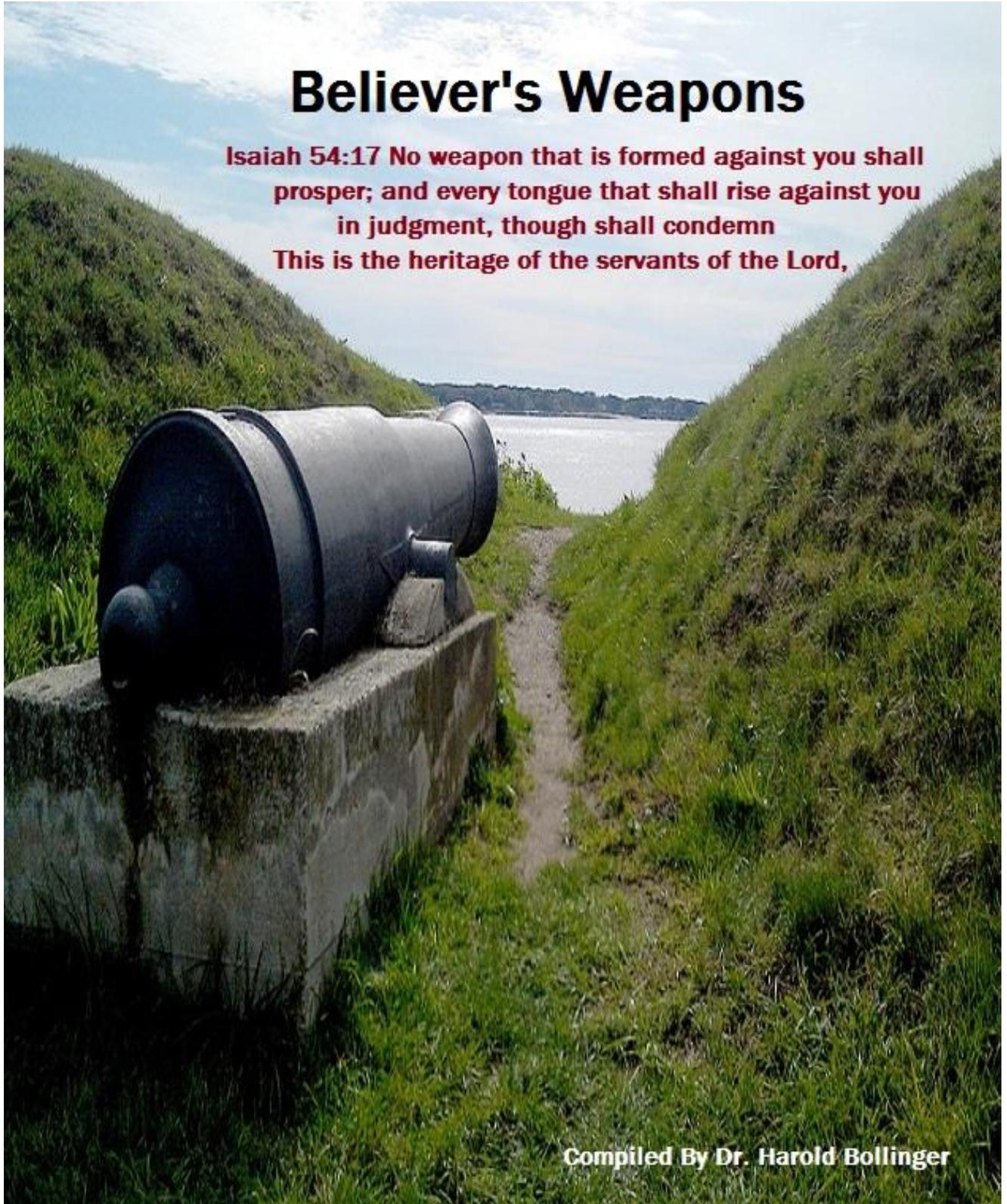


Believer's Weapons

Isaiah 54:17 No weapon that is formed against you shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against you in judgment, though shall condemn This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord,



Compiled By Dr. Harold Bollinger

The weapons of our warfare.

Weapons of God

2 Corinthians 10:4

For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses.

We, like Paul, are merely weak humans, but we don't need to use human plans and methods to win our battles. God's mighty weapons are available to us as we fight against the devil's "strongholds."

The Christian must choose whose methods to use—God's or the world's.

Paul assures us that God's mighty weapons—prayer, faith, hope, love, God's Word, the Holy Spirit—are powerful and effective (see Ephesians 6:13-18)!

These weapons can break down the proud human arguments against God and the walls that Satan builds to keep people from finding God. When dealing with people's proud arguments that keep them from a relationship with Christ, we may be tempted to use our own methods. But nothing can break down these barriers like God's weapons.

God has prepared for himself Godly weapons.

Psalms 7:13

He has also prepared for Himself deadly weapons; He makes His arrows fiery shafts.

When allowed to run its course, evil destroys itself. Violent people become victims of violence, and liars become victims of others' deceit (9:15, 16). In the process, however, innocent people are hurt.

Sometimes God intervenes and stops evildoers in their tracks in order to protect his followers.

At other times, for reasons known only to him, God allows evil to continue even though innocent people are hurt. It is during these times that we must ask God to protect us. Remember that God will execute final justice, although it may not be during our lifetime.

God has brought forth the weapons of His indignation.

Jeremiah 50:25

The LORD has opened His armory and has brought forth the weapons of His indignation, for it is a work of the Lord GOD of hosts in the land of the Chaldeans.

Merathaim was located in southern Babylonia; Pekod was in eastern Babylonia.

Pride was Babylon's characteristic sin. Pride comes from feeling self-sufficient or believing that we don't need God. Proud nations or persons, however, will eventually fail because they refuse to recognize God as the ultimate power. Getting rid of pride is not easy, but if we can admit that it often rules us and ask God to forgive us, he will help us overcome it. The best antidote to pride is to focus our attention on the greatness and goodness of God.

The salvation of God is our weapon.

Psalm 35:3

Draw also the spear and the battle-axe to meet those who pursue me; Say to my soul, "I am your salvation."

This is one of the "imprecatory" (cursing) psalms that call upon God to deal with enemies. These psalms sound extremely harsh, but we must remember the following:

(1) David could not understand why he was forced to flee from men who were unjustly seeking to kill him. He was God's anointed king over a nation called to annihilate the evil people of the land.

(2) David's call for justice was sincere; it was not a cover for his own personal vengeance. He truly wanted God's perfect ideal for his nation.

(3) David did not say that *he* would take revenge, but he gave the matter to God. These are merely his suggestions.

(4) These psalms use hyperbole (or overstatement). They were meant to motivate others to take a strong stand against sin and evil.

Cruelty may be far removed from some people's experience, but it is a daily reality to others. God promises to help the persecuted and to bring judgment on unrepentant sinners. When we pray for justice to be done, we are praying as David did. When Christ returns, the wicked will be punished.

God's weapons of war shatter nations and destroy kingdoms.

Jeremiah 51:20

He says, "You are my war-club, my weapon of war; and with you I shatter nations, and with you I destroy kingdoms."

It is foolish to trust in human-made images rather than in God. It is easy to think that the things we see and touch will bring us more security than God. But things rust, rot, and decay. God is eternal. Why put your trust in something that will disappear within a few years?

Weapons of Christ

Out of the mouth of Christ comes a sharp two-edged sword.

Revelation 2:12-13

"And to the angel of the church in Pergamum write: The One who has the sharp two-edged sword says this:

I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat is: and thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith, even in those days wherein Antipas was my faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth.

The city of Pergamum was built on a hill 1,000 feet above the surrounding countryside, creating a natural fortress. It was a sophisticated city, a center of Greek culture and education, with a 200,000-volume library.

But it was also the center of four cults, and it rivaled Ephesus in its worship of idols.

The city's chief god was Asclepius, whose symbol was a serpent and who was considered the god of healing. People came to Pergamum from all over the world to seek healing from this god.

As the center for four idolatrous cults (Zeus, Dionysius, Asclepius, and Athene), Pergamum was called the city "where Satan has his throne."

Surrounded by worship of Satan and the Roman emperor as god, the church at Pergamum refused to renounce its faith, even when Satan's worshipers martyred one of its members. Standing firm against the strong pressures and temptations of society is never easy, but the alternative is deadly (2:11).

It was not easy to be a Christian in Pergamum. Believers experienced great pressure to compromise or leave the faith. (For information on the Nicolaitans, see the first note on 2:6.)

Nothing is known about Antipas except that he did *not* compromise.

He was faithful, and he died for his faith. Apparently, however, some in the church were tolerating those who taught or practiced what Christ opposed.

Compromise can be defined as a blending of the qualities of two different things or a concession of principles. Cooperate with people as much as you can, but avoid any alliance, partnership, or participation that could lead to immoral practices.

Weapons of the Believer

The Word of truth is the weapons of righteousness.

2 Corinthians 6:7

In the word of truth, in the power of God; by the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and the left.

What a difference it makes to know Jesus! He cares for us in spite of what the world thinks. Christians don't have to give in to public opinion and pressure. Paul stood faithful to God whether people praised him or slandered him. He remained joyous and content in the most difficult hardships. Don't let circumstances or people's expectations control you. Be firm as you stand true to God, and refuse to compromise his standards for living.

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When dealing with people's proud arguments that keep them from a relationship with Christ, we may be tempted to use our own methods. But nothing can break down these barriers like God's weapons.

Paul uses military terminology to describe this warfare against sin and Satan. God must be the commander in chief—even our thoughts must be submitted to his control as we live for him. Spirit-empowered believers must capture every thought and yield it to Christ.

When exposed to ideas or opportunities that might lead to wrong desires, you have a choice. You can recognize the danger and turn away, or you can allow unhealthy thoughts to take you captive. You capture your fantasies and desires when you honestly admit them to the Lord and ask him to redirect your thinking. Ask

God to give you the spirit of discernment to keep your thoughts focused on his truth.

Let the praises of God be as a two edged sword.

Psalm 149:6

Let the high praises of God be in their mouth, and a two-edged sword in their hand,

Although the Bible invites us to praise God, we often aren't sure how to go about it. Here, several ways are suggested: by singing, dancing, or playing musical instruments. God enjoys his people, and we should enjoy praising him.

The sharp sword symbolizes the completeness of judgment that will be executed by the Messiah when he returns to punish all evildoers (Revelation 1:16).

The helmet of salvation and the sword of the spirit is the word of God.

Ephesians 6:17

And take THE HELMET OF SALVATION, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

In the Christian life we battle against rulers and authorities (the powerful evil forces of fallen angels headed by the devil, who is a vicious fighter, see 1 Peter 5:8). To withstand their attacks, we must depend on God's strength and use every piece of his armor.

Paul is not only giving this counsel to the church, the body of Christ, but to all individuals within the church. The whole body needs to be armed.

As you do battle against the "mighty powers in this dark world," fight in the strength of the church, whose power comes from the Holy Spirit.

The word of God is sharper than any two-edged sword.

Hebrews 4:12

For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

The Word of God is not simply a collection of words from God, a vehicle for communicating ideas; it is living, life-changing, and dynamic as it works in us. With the incisiveness of a surgeon's knife, God's Word reveals who we are and what we are not.

It penetrates the core of our moral and spiritual life. It discerns what is within us, both good and evil. The demands of God's Word require decisions. We must not only listen to the Word; we must also let it shape our lives.

Nothing can be hidden from God. He knows about everyone everywhere, and everything about us is wide open to his all-seeing eyes. God sees all we do and knows all we think.

Even when we are unaware of his presence, he is there. When we try to hide from him, he sees us. We can have no secrets from God. It is comforting to realize that although God knows us intimately, he still loves us.

Christ is superior to the priests, and his priesthood is superior to their priesthood. To the Jews, the high priest was the highest religious authority in the land.

He alone entered the Most Holy Place in the Temple once a year to make atonement for the sins of the whole nation (Leviticus 16).

Like the high priest, Jesus mediates between God and us. As humanity's representative, he intercedes for us before God. As God's representative, he assures us of God's forgiveness.

Jesus has more authority than the Jewish high priests because he is truly God and truly man. Unlike the high priest, who could go before God only once a year, Christ is always at God's right hand, interceding for us. He is always available to hear us when we pray.

Jesus is like us because he experienced a full range of temptations throughout his life as a human being. We can be comforted knowing that Jesus faced temptation—he can sympathize with us.

We can be encouraged knowing that Jesus faced temptation without giving in to sin. He shows us that we do not have to sin when facing the seductive

lure of temptation. Jesus is the only perfect human being who has ever lived.

Prayer is our approach to God, and we are to come "boldly." Some Christians approach God meekly with heads hung low, afraid to ask him to meet their needs.

Others pray flippantly, giving little thought to what they say. Come with reverence because he is your King. But also come with bold assurance because he is your Friend and Counselor.

Wisdom is better than weapons of war.

Ecclesiastes 9:18

Wisdom is better than weapons of war, but one sinner destroys much good.

Our society honors wealth, attractiveness, and success above wisdom. Yet wisdom is a greater asset than strength, although it is often overlooked. Even though it is more effective, wisdom from people who are poor often goes unheeded.

An invitation is given to open your heart's door to Jesus

Rev. 3:20

Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.

To ask Jesus to come into your heart please pray this Prayer:

Dear Lord Jesus, I believe you are the Christ, the Son of the Living God. I ask you to forgive me of my sins and coming into my heart. I accept you as savior and will follow you as Lord. Amen.

References:

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Additional comments and charts are taken from: *Life Application Study Bible*. Illinois: Tyndale House 2007. Print