

GRACE BIBLE CHURCH
Robert R. McLaughlin Bible Ministries

The Tree of Life is a weekly teaching summary.
The Tree of Life for week ending 08/11/02.

**Your Own Place, Your Personal Sense of Destiny,
and Your Own Country. Part 2.**
The Doctrine of the Christian Soldier

In our study of Jacob, we have seen him wasting 14 years of his life after leaving the promised land, **Gen 30:25-26**, “*Now it came about when Rachel had borne Joseph, that Jacob said to Laban, ‘Send me away, that I may go to my own place and to my own country. Give me my wives and my children for whom I have served you, and let me depart; for you yourself know my service which I have rendered you.’*”

The ultimate goal of the kingdom of darkness is to do whatever is necessary to take the believer away from the teaching of Bible doctrine and the predesigned plan of God, from “*your own place and your own country.*” Your own **place** represents your personal sense of destiny and your own **country** represents the predesigned plan of God. If you are serious about your relationship with God and want to remain in your own place and your own country, Satan will attack you.

He always attacks when the believer first gets into Bible doctrine. No sooner does the individual discover doctrinal truth, then temptations and things he pursued for years are brought in to distract him and drag him back into the cosmic system, **Mat 13:18-22**. The kingdom of darkness also attacks when the believer is undergoing a great adversity. This may be a time of physical weakness that at some time may be a part of the calling of God on your life. In **2Co 11:26** Paul wrote, “*I have been on frequent journeys, in dangers from rivers, dangers from robbers, dangers from my countrymen, dangers from the Gentiles, dangers in the city, dangers in the wilderness, dangers on the sea, dangers among false brethren.*” Remember the great statement Job made to his wife, **Job 2:10**, “*You speak as one of the foolish women speaks. Shall we indeed accept good from God and not accept adversity?*”

The kingdom of darkness will attack when the Christian enters a significant venture for God’s glory; as Paul said in **1Th 2:18**, “*For we wanted to come to you—I, Paul, more than once—and yet Satan hindered us.*” They will also attack those who are serious about their relationship with God after a great manifestation of God’s love and God’s Word. For example, when Paul was exalted with the “abundance of revelations,” he received the “messenger of Satan,” **2Co 12:1-9**.

The kingdom of darkness will come to the believer, hanging out false colors in the guise of friendship, as an “angel of light” teaching false doctrine, and they will often try to use self-pity on the believer, knowing how vulnerable he is when he is feeling sorry for himself. Satan shows us false colors to disguise himself in the a “friendly uniform,” to appear to be on our side. He will even send reversionistic people to the local assembly who are not called to that assembly, **Gal 2:4**, “*But it was because of the false brethren*

who had sneaked in to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, in order to bring us into bondage.”

Satan also has an intelligence committee to monitor the Christian soldiers who have positive volition toward doctrine, **Eph 6:12** (*“spiritual forces of wickedness”*). He has spies who are experts at exploiting the sin which “so easily entangles us,” **Heb 12:1**. It is important to understand how subtle the kingdom of darkness is and how they *gradually* approach the soul. When they first tempt the believer, they will demand very little, knowing that is all they can get from him at the time. If they were to demand his complete allegiance to the *cosmos*, or the world system, all at once, they would be denied; therefore, they work at it slowly but surely. It may begin with one wrong thought thrown at the believer’s mind with Satan’s “flaming missiles,” and once that thought is allowed to sit in the mind for a while and is free to wander, it will eventually travel from the mind to the tongue and to someone’s ear and their mind, and so on. Then **Jam 1:14-16** becomes a reality: *“But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust. Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death. Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren.”* Satan, like a shrewd warrior, also has his reserves; he always has some fresh troops at hand. If his first temptation fails, he has many more. This attack is made only on the Christian soldier. The majority of Christians are no threat to Satan, and their problems are with the Lord, **1Co 16:22**, *“If anyone does not love the Lord, let him be accursed. Maranatha.”*

Another strategy that Satan employs is to feign retreat and pretend he has been defeated, leading the Christian to believe that he has won a victory where he actually has not. Our Lord warned of unclean spirits going out *voluntarily*, only to come back even stronger than before, **Mat 12:44-45**, *“Then it says, ‘I will return to my house from which I came’; and when it comes, it finds it unoccupied, swept, and put in order. Then it goes, and takes along with it seven other spirits more wicked than itself, and they go in and live there; and the last state of that man becomes worse than the first.”*

A Christian soldier is required to know the distinct beats of the drum and the sound of the trumpet, meaning the distinct doctrines of the Word of God taught by the pastor-teacher. The communicator of doctrine is told in **Isa 58:1**, *“‘Cry loudly, do not hold back; raise your voice like a trumpet.’”* Just as a trumpeter needs to be well-skilled in his instrument, so the pastor needs to be well-skilled in his communication of doctrine, **1Co 14:8**, *“For if the bugle produces an indistinct sound, who will prepare himself for battle?”* If the pastor does not rightly divide the word of God and communicate accurately, how will the soldiers under his command know what orders to follow? The Christian soldier may need an alarm sounded in his ears when danger is near or an enemy is coming, and therefore he needs to recognize the notes of the bugle, i.e., the necessary doctrine. It may be a call to duty or to prayer or to any form of service, and the faithful Christian soldier will listen closely to the spiritual trumpet. Sometimes it sounds reproof, sometimes counsel, sometimes warning, and sometimes comfort; it is all carefully observed by the well-trained Christian soldier, **2Ti 3:16-4:2**.

If you are serious about your relationship with God and are determined to stay the course in your own place and your own country, you will be a person of courage, bold and determined, not easily discouraged nor dismayed by the threats, malice, or strength of an enemy. As God said to Joshua, His courageous soldier who was preparing to enter the promised land, **Jos 1:7**, *“Only be strong and very courageous; be careful to do*

according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, so that you may have success wherever you go.” The Christian soldier will cultivate the attitude of David in **Psa 23:4**, *“Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil; for Thou art with me.”*

Principles of Bible doctrine impart boldness and courage to the Christian amidst danger that he faces in the angelic conflict because of his faithfulness to doctrine. This is the virtue of our calling; motivation and zeal are given to us when we realize the privilege of fulfilling God’s plan for our life. When we consider that we are fighting the good fight of faith and that we have the *honor* of glorifying Christ, we are motivated as Christian soldiers. We see the courage of the early church in **Act 5:41**, *“So they went on their way from the presence of the Council, rejoicing that they had been considered worthy to suffer shame for His name.”* We should be motivated to stand up for the **cause** of Christ, the **Word** of Christ, and the **people** of Christ. The Christian soldier must carry out his calling to gather for Christ, **Mat 12:30**, *“He who is not with Me is against Me; and he who does not gather with Me scatters.”*

The Christian soldier understands the power and strength of God, who has promised to stand by him in all his conflicts, even with the worst of his enemies, **Isa 41:10-14**. The Apostle John said in **1Jo 4:4**, *“You are from God, little children, and have overcome them; because greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world.”* The Christian soldier understands the call of God; every Christian must take the time to learn how to use his time, talent, and treasure to glorify God, as well as to learn what his spiritual gift is. The Christian soldier has a good conscience, which made Paul bold in the presence of his irate adversaries, **Act 23:1**, *“And Paul, looking intently at the Council, said, ‘Brethren, I have lived my life with a perfectly good conscience before God up to this day.’”* A soldier with a burden of guilt cannot engage an enemy with the courage he needs. Satan loves to make accusations against God’s people, to condemn them and plague them with guilt, and the sins and failures he brings up are true. However, the man and the woman after God’s own heart never quits. Peter gives us great instruction in **1Pe 3:15-16**, *“But sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence; and keep a good conscience so that in the thing in which you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame.”* Finally, the Christian soldier has the assurance of victory, which also serves to increase his boldness and courage. The Christian soldier believes that he is more than a conqueror, even before he enters the conflict, because his captain has assured him he shall overcome in the end and receive the crown of life, **Rev 2:10**, *“Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to cast some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and you will have tribulation ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.”*

A soldier must expect to endure hardness and prepare himself; the Christian soldier must concede to a life attended by many hardships and difficulties if he desires to bring glory to Christ. Just as soldiers must often experience hardship that others know nothing about, so the Christian soldier goes through personal challenges that no one else realizes. We are told in **1Pe 5:6-9**, *“Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time, casting all your anxiety upon Him, because He cares for you. Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil,*

prowls about like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. But resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same experiences of suffering are being accomplished by your brethren who are in the world.”

We may think that no one else can understand what we are going through personally, but the Bible says otherwise, **1Pe 5:10**, “*And after you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory in Christ, will Himself perfect [mature], confirm [prove], strengthen, and establish you.*” The Christian’s life is accompanied by many difficulties that he must endure as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. We must learn to endure the hardship that results from our own personal sins. Our own failures can bring great sorrow and trouble upon us. We hurt ourselves and then we end up looking for someone to blame. Sin not only hinders the Christian soldier, but many times his own conscience wounds him for it. Sin not only brings hardships upon the soul, but many times distress and anxiety upon the body.

We must also learn to endure the hardship that comes from self-denial. We are not called to asceticism but we are called to self-sacrifice, **Mat 16:21-27**. There are times when you may be called to deny yourself of prosperity, riches, wealth, success, sleep, rest, pleasure, or whatever is necessary in your pursuit of victory. If anything is taking you away from a relationship with God, God will ask you to part with it, **Mat 19:16-30**. We must learn to endure hardship from people, vicious and cruel reproaches, and everything that the so-called “lovable brethren” can devise and throw at us, **Jam 3:8-10**, “*But no one can tame the tongue; it is a restless evil and full of deadly poison. With it we bless our Lord and Father; and with it we curse men, who have been made in the likeness of God; from the same mouth come both blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be this way.*” The tongues of many men are cruel weapons, as in **Psa 42:10**, “*As a shattering of my bones, my adversaries revile me, while they say to me all day long, ‘Where is your God?’*” Being mocked, ridiculed, and judged are among the sufferings and tests of the Christian soldier, but as long as he holds his ground **in his own place and his own country**, he will overcome them.

Gen 30:25-26 *Now it came about when Rachel had borne Joseph, that Jacob said to Laban, “Send me away, that I may go to my own place and to my own country. Give me my wives and my children for whom I have served you, and let me depart; for you yourself know my service which I have rendered you.”*

Jacob now had 11 sons and a daughter, all born during the last seven years. Now that he had fulfilled his bargain, he asked Laban to dismiss him and let him go home with his wives and children. However, we read in **Gen 30:27**, “*But Laban said to him, ‘If now it pleases you, stay with me; I have divined that the Lord has blessed me on your account. Name me your wages, and I will give it.’*” Although Laban talked about the Lord, he did not know the Lord or understand who the Lord was. Laban was still involved in heathen practices such as divination, fortune telling, and consulting mediums. These activities are strictly forbidden in **Lev 19:26**, **Deu 18:10-14**. However, Laban was still able to realize that the Lord was blessing him with materialism on account of Jacob. Laban wanted Jacob to continue working for him so he asked him to name his wages. (He had done this once before in **Gen 29:15**, “*Then Laban said to Jacob, ‘Because you are my relative, should you therefore serve me for nothing? Tell me, what shall your wages be?’*”) Now,

in **Gen 30:29-30**, 20 years later, “He [Jacob] said to him, ‘You yourself know how I have served you and how your cattle have fared with me. For you had little before I came, and it has increased to a multitude; and the Lord has blessed you wherever I turned. But now, when shall I provide for my own household also?’” Jacob is reminding Laban how hard he had worked for him and how the Lord had blessed and multiplied what little Laban had when Jacob first came. Now it was time for Jacob to do something for his own household. In **Gen 30:31-32**, “So he [Laban] said, ‘What shall I give you?’ And Jacob said, ‘You shall not give me anything. If you will do this one thing for me, I will again pasture and keep your flock: let me pass through your entire flock **today**, removing from there every speckled and spotted sheep, and every black one among the lambs, and the spotted and speckled among the goats; and such shall be my wages.’” In that region, the goats are generally black or dark brown but rarely white or spotted, and the sheep are generally white but very seldom black or speckled; Jacob is only asking for a small minority of Laban’s livestock.

Jacob continues in **Gen 30:33**, “So my honesty will answer for me later [we will see just how “honest” Jacob is], when you come concerning my wages. Every one that is not speckled and spotted among the goats and black among the lambs, if found with me, will be considered stolen.” Laban thought this would be a good deal for him, a cheap price for Jacob’s knowledgeable and skillful care of his flock, so he agreed, **Gen 30:34**, “And Laban said, ‘Good, let it be according to your word.’” When Laban responds this quickly and with as few words as possible, he obviously thinks he is getting the best the deal (one con to another). In **Gen 30:35**, “So he [Laban] removed on that day the striped and spotted male goats and all the speckled and spotted female goats, every one with white in it, and all the black ones among the sheep, and gave them into the care of his sons.” Laban accepted the deal, and then in his own deceitful way he tried to cheat Jacob again. He removed what few sheep and goats that would have belonged to Jacob, gave them to his sons, and sent them on a three-day journey so that Jacob would not know where they were. Laban believed that he had destroyed Jacob and made it impossible for Jacob to ever recover and be successful again. But this story is far from over.

For a more detailed study, order last week’s tapes IA11-190 to IA11-193.