

# The Spiritual Soldier

by Dean Taylor

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**Scripture:** Numbers 23:9, Numbers 23:21, Numbers 23:23, Numbers 25:1, Psalms 13:3, 2 Peter 2:15, Jude 1:11, Revelation 2:14

**Topics:** "Faithfulness in Spiritual Warfare", "The Dangers of Compromise"

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## Description

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## Transcript

Well, it's amazing to be here. You know, there is just something powerful about a charity Bible school. Amen, Mom.

Yeah, it is so good to be here. I just am not just saying that in flattery. I say that in a true way, and it is an honor to worship with you and to be here.

I'll be speaking through the week here, and we're going to be doing some... I was given a military theme, which I tend to do. Brother Tim had that for the whole week, and so in that, though, I'm going to be trying to get into some good Bible teaching and good things that we're going to be looking at, but the idea behind all of that is to inspire you to be soldiers of the Lord and for your generation. The scripture that we're going to use for the week is this very familiar one.

It is excellent if we unpack this and take it very seriously. No one engaged in warfare entangles himself with the affairs of this life. For what reason? That he may please him who enlisted him as a soldier, and that'll be our passage for the week.

You know, as I'm here, and just reconnecting with so many of you and getting to know some of you, I remember an old song. I'm back from my youth, from an old singer named Rich Mullins, and there was a lyric in there that said, Then I wake up in the world that I am partly made of, and the world that is partly of my own making. And as we've walked through several things together, as I've walked through with your parents, my children, about your age, and different things, and older, I just, I'm, different parts of your life make different people out of us.

And as we think about being soldiers of the Lord today and going through that, I can't help but ponder and think of some of the battle injuries, some of the casualties, and I know that probably a lot of you have some of those. Probably some of them might even have been inflicted by myself or other ministers or something that's here. And I beg for your mercy with that, and your forgiveness, and ask us all, for this next generation, how do you do it? How are you going to take these words of life and put them into practice for the kingdom of God? As I ponder the casualties, I, you know, it does something to you, and as it does to soldiers, it does, you know, when you're there in battle and people are falling, your friends are falling around you, the soldier comes back differently.

But there's something that's kind of expected in that. I mean, if you're going to be running into battle and your buddy gets shot, it's, you know, it's terrible. But there's something kind of expected.

What really demoralizes troops, historically? What demoralizes troops is when the systems break down. The country itself fights on itself. You were sent out to battle, then the battle switches, and the politics change, and you come home, instead of a hero, you come home a fool.

And that demoralizes people. That's what demoralizes troops. And so as we look today, I want to address, throughout this week, not only the casualties and the physical things that are involved, but some of the, even the propaganda, the war of your mind and of your soul.

And see the demoralizing of the church and the attacks that we're being faced with on a higher level. And I think that those are the things that can really get to us. There's so many different ways that Satan is using to attack the church today.

Now, as a historian, I'm not going to say that, you know, this age is the worst of any kind. In a way it is, but every age has its temptation. Every age has its attacks.

And I think that we have those today as well. I think of, when I moved here, when I was first attending this church, you know, things like the internet, and no one even had, hardly, cell phones. When my first son was born, the internet didn't even exist.

It didn't even exist. We didn't even know the term. And since then, you know, we wrestled with, what are we going to do with this? Should we outlaw cell phones? Should we not have this? And we tried all those kinds of things.

Well, now, you know, toasters have Wi-Fi, for crying out loud. You know, so you're not going to get out of that. So we need to prepare a whole new generation of people that are able to deal with these temptations and deal with these things that are around us.

And we can't live in a cave, I don't think, any longer. And so we need to be strong, and we need to be able to look at those things at a deep level. But I tell you what, I have hope.

I have hope for several reasons. I have hope, first of all, it is inspiring to me to be in a room with this next generation of young people that are grown in the faith and now come and worship God and praise Him and want to serve Him. That gives me hope.

So seeing this generation, seeing that you've survived, however and wherever and however you got here, you're here. You're standing, so to speak. You made it.

Satan hasn't cast you out that you're not going to want to hear the words of God and come to a place where you're studying. And praise God for that. Keep up, and I'm trying, I want to encourage you even further.

And I'm so blessed that the Spirit of God, I think as, I heard it several times, Brother Tim, one of the young ladies brought it up, and there were several things. This passage was on my heart of why we should have hope today. It was already said several times this morning.

It's a promise. This is a promise from Isaiah 59, 19. So shall they fear the name of the Lord from the west and His glory from the rising of the sun.

And then here's the promise. When the enemy comes in like a flood, and I think we can say that. We heard that today, right? When the enemy comes in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord will lift up a standard against him.

Do you know what a standard is? Do you know what that is? It was a military, you know, the banner. And so the guy who would be carrying the standard into battle, which it represented everything that they were about. As a matter of fact, in ancient Roman history, when Augustus was made after Julius Caesar, we got Augustus Caesar, and they had lost before Julius Caesar the standards to Persia.

They lost. One of the generals had lost it to Persia, and it was gone. And when Augustus, one of the things that made Augustus such a famous hero is that he got the standards back.

You find ancient coins that say, we got the standard back. They started printing money. We got it back.

That's kind of packed into this thought about what we have here with this scripture. When the enemy comes in like a flood, the Lord will lift up a standard against him. The Redeemer will come to Zion, and to those who turn from transgression and Jacob, says the Lord.

So powerful. So this week, I'm going to be looking at some of the introductions. I'm going to take you to one of my favorite passages to preach on.

There's a number of a scene there today and some applications to that. On Monday, tomorrow, I'm going to go through some battle plans, some Bible interpretations, some good Bible teaching. I'm a historical theologian, and I'm going to take you through the way I do that.

Tuesday, we're going to look at espionage, infiltration, and subterfuge. We're talking about how the church and how you are getting attacked from different ways and how we can stand strong against that. Wednesday, I'm going to be talking about the weapons of our warfare.

And in that, I'm going to be talking about your conscience, conviction, being born again, and then also walking in faith and prayer and battles against the enemy and how you can walk victoriously. And then on Thursday, we're going to talk about kingdom building. This is a day off, sorry, up to Friday.

Interpret that for me. So, let's go into this first section. Turn your Bibles to Numbers chapter 21.

It's one of my favorite passages to preach on. I won't unpack the whole thing entirely. I'm just going to be bringing out several points.

And what time do I have until 11? Okay. Okay, excellent. One of my favorite passages for this reason.

You get a rare view of a spectator view of the people of God. You don't get that. If you think about the Scriptures, it's usually dialogue or something that is between different people and everything.

But in this passage, and y'all can help me to think of some other ones, but you're getting a, people are looking on to the people of God and then they report what they see. That's what we're going to be getting in this section. We also have a section that you have bookends of the people of God who were walking in faith, strong, forgiven, powerful, and how they responded until they didn't.

And in this window, it's one of the most powerful windows, I think, of seeing what the church should be like, what you should be like, and walking in faith. And then the pitfalls and the blessings that come with that. So, I'm going to break these down into a few things of the trying when Balaam and Balak are trying to curse Israel.

Great insights with that. So, let's start with the bookend of when they got faith. So, we know the story in Numbers 21.

Let's pick it up at verse 4. Then they journeyed from Mount Hor by the way of the Red Sea to go around the land of Edom, and listen to this, and the soul of the people became very discouraged on the way. The King James says, because of the way. I like that.

I know for a fact that there are many, if not all of you, that are dealing with being discouraged because of the way. And so, in this, we tend to fall. And I'm telling you, if there's anything that, if there's any weapon that I have seen take young people, middle age, and old people down, it is discouragement.

When we get discouraged, it's bad. And we give up. And it happens to all of us.

John the Baptist, who the Scripture says was the greatest prophet and man of God in the Old Covenant, and yet, he in the prison was saying, Okay, I heard you preaching you'll set the captives free, and I'm in jail. Could you send and go talk to Jesus and say, Are you really the Messiah? Are you really the Christ? And even John the Baptist, and you remember what Jesus' response to them was? Besides, tell them I've done all these incredible works of God. Blessed is he who is not offended in me.

The journey is tough sometimes, and being offended, we can tend to give up. I recognize that. It pulls at me almost every day.

Give up. You can't. And I'm hoping to encourage that, but they did, and it was bad.

It says in verse 5, And the people spoke against God and against Moses. Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no food and no water, and are so low this worthless bread. Man, you know, maybe wherever you are, and you're thinking, I'm in the middle of nowhere.

My parents moved me to this place, or whatever. You're in the middle of wilderness, and you're getting discouraged with your chances for finding a life partner, or your jobs, or your careers, or whatever. And

you're getting very discouraged, and you're saying, And you're starting to actually, Satan is working at that to kind of disturb you and make you lose the faith.

So, in this case, this old covenant, he brought a plague on them. And it was very serious. We remember the story.

They were dying. But then he gave this promise. And I won't dwell on this, but Jesus picks up this whole analogy in John chapter 3 of the example of faith.

And he lifts up this serpent, obviously a likeness of the sacrifice of Christ on the cross. If you look at this, you will be healed. And they did.

Well, those who did, the rest of them died. But those who did, did. And so everyone now, leaving this thing, were redeemed, saved, clear, clear heaven.

And they were all walking now with this faith. This is a beautiful place to start. So, they're taking this, and you start to see them moving, and they're going.

And the next chapter there in 22, it starts talking about them taking this country and this country. And people start getting nervous, and particularly Balak is getting nervous. And he starts seeing, okay, they knocked out this country, they knocked out this country, and that country.

I'm next. And so he found this prophet, this seer at Balaam, and he said, I want you to do something for me. I'm really nervous about this army coming through.

I want you to curse them. I want you to curse them. So the whole talking donkey story that you grew up with and all that happened.

But probably the really best part of the story is that he gets there, he makes all these sacrifices, and chapter 22 talks about it. He makes these, I think, seven altars and all these bulls and all this. And he says, but listen, I'm a real prophet.

I only speak what God tells me. In other words, he wasn't making this stuff up. He's kind of report.

I'll go out there, we'll do the sacrifice, I'm going to try to curse these people. We'll see what happens. His integrity was impressive, so he does it.

And he goes out there, goes on the top, and he looks over, and this is where we get that glimpse. And this is the part that I want you to get in this idea of what this church. Remember, everyone's redeemed, everyone's saved, everyone's walking with a clear conscience, and they've been knocking out all this spiritual victory, and he looks at them.

And this is what he says. So Balak comes to him and says, okay, well, did you curse them? Why didn't you curse them? You blessed them. And in chapter 23, verse 8, he says, How shall I curse whom God has not cursed? And how shall I denounce whom the Lord has not denounced? And check out this little peak of the people of God.

From the tops of the rock I see him, and from the hills I behold him. There are people dwelling alone, and not reckoning itself among the nations. Who can count the dust of Jacob, or number one-fourth of Israel? And then looking at him, he's looking over there and goes, Let me die the death of the righteous, and let

my death be like them.

He went there to curse them, but there was something about their purposefulness. Somebody, one of you young ladies said, you heard from the Lord this idea of, our worship would be attractive. There was something in this view here that he was seeing, that he actually longed, like, I wish I could walk down from the mountain and be a part of them.

And that's what he saw. This. Another amazing Old Testament foreshadowing of the cross.

They lined up like this, and this is the view of what he looked down. And you think of our scripture here. No one entangled in warfare, excuse me, no one engaged in warfare, entangles himself with the affairs of this life.

For what reason? That he may please him who enlisted him as a soldier. So there was all kind of things going on here up the mountains and around the corner and all this. There was pagan worship.

There were things going on. There was politics. There was all the different things.

But these people knew what they were doing, and they kept to it. They were not involved with the affairs of the world. They were involved with the affairs of God.

And that's what being separated unto God means. Now I know a lot of you may have had some scarring ideas of what that looks like or whatever. And I don't want you to lose this concept of being separated unto God because it is so pivotal in the New Covenant.

Even if we've messed it up with different baggages along the way, you have to have this concept. To give you an analogy of what this looks like in a non-Christian way, you all have read, you've heard this testimony. I know you've probably said it here at your mission schools and things, but it's really impressive for those who haven't, of this communist.

And he was writing in the 1950s about his passion provoking the American capitalists that you have nothing. Watch the way we communists are dedicated to our cause. I have a little excerpt from that given in a magazine in 1957.

And he says this, challenging the American capitalist. What seems of first importance to you is to me either not desirable or impossible of realization. But there is one thing about which I am dead earnest.

And that is the communist cause. It's my life, my business, my religion, my hobby, my sweetheart, my wife, my mistress, my bread and meat. I work at it in the daytime and dream of it at night.

It holds on me, grows, not lessens. As time goes on, I'll be in this the rest of my life. When you think of me, it is necessary to think of communism as well, because I am inseparably bound to it.

Therefore, I can't carry on a friendship, a love affair, or even a conversation without relation to the force which both drives and guides my life. I evaluate people, I evaluate books, ideas, actions, according to how they affect the communist cause and by their attitude towards it. I've already been in jail because of my ideas, and if necessary, I am ready to go to a firing squad.

At the end he says, and when we are not doing the big things and the exciting things, we take our spare time to do the dull, routine chores and endless legwork and errands which are inescapably connected to

running a live organization. Communists don't have time or money for many movies and concerts and T-bone steaks and decent homes and new cars. We have been described as fanatics.

We are. Our lives are dominated by one great overshadowing factor, the struggle for communism. If anything would, in an opposite way of the word of God, express our passage.

Think of it. No one engaged in warfare entangles himself with the affairs of this life that he may please him who has enlisted him as a soldier. Do you get even a part of that? You know, I thought about, I think most of you know, my wife and I were in the military some 30 years ago or something like that, and we decided we had a change of allegiance and we decided to follow God's army instead of the world's army.

But I tell you what. You know, have you ever listened to a bugle playing on a cold morning or a bagpipe playing? I mean, it's not the best music, you know what I mean? I mean, a bugler playing on a very cold morning is usually messing up a little bit, and a bagpipe can't hardly play in tune. But there's something about it that gets you.

It gets you. Do you get that with the church at all? With Christianity? With God's ways? With his? Do you have the songs that we were singing up here passionately? You know, you don't listen to a bugle every day or a bagpipe every day, but there's something in it that makes up who you are. You've got to get that to understand of being a spiritual soldier.

The church, the church's ways, and things, and yes, we have our mistakes, and every generation makes them, and your generation is going to make them too. But have that in you, that you have something in you that's the word of God, the army of God, and those hymns and those ways and something go to you. I believe that the patriotism, that spirit of patriotism is of God.

I believe that there's something inside of us that makes us to be nationalist, to be patriotic, but I also think God is very jealous that we give it only to him and to his kingdom. It's very easy for us to get off in both Phariseeism, we get off into little groups and factions and people want to gather you to them and make a name for themselves, or we get off into the world's politics and nationalism and get off into different armies and everything like that, and either way, we're taking that something inside of us that God, I think, has given to us to be zealous and patriotic for the kingdom of God, and we give it to other things. God is jealous over it.

He said in Mark 8.15, he sums it all up, then he charged them saying, take heed and beware, that's interesting, he says both, take heed, beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the leaven of Herod. Politics, nationalism, Phariseeism, factionism, all these different things, apart from the person of Jesus Christ. Little cults will try to grab your attention, and nowadays with the way the internet is coming in and sweeping, you have so many different voices to try to grab at you, from cults to politics to everything that are going to try to get a hold of you.

Give your heart only to Jesus Christ, and be patriotic about it. This one thing I do, God said. Woe to the scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, for they travel land and sea to win one proselyte, and when he has won, you make him twice as much the sons of hell as yourself.

You have to be careful that even in, even in our relation with things of the church, we have to be careful, keep your eyes on Christ himself. Because I believe this, and I've seen some of it in my own mind. I'm going to wax a little philosophically, if you'll allow me for just a minute.

I believe that the greatest atrocities that have befallen mankind have been done by men who think they do God a service. Watch it over and over again. If you read Hitler, the actual writings of Hitler or Stalin or any of these antichrists, Napoleon certainly, any of these ones, there are modern ones I'll try not to mention, they're always being given to you in the light that we're going to save you.

I tell you what, if you would read the accounts of the Mennonites, or actually all the conservative Christians that were running headlong after Hitler during the World War II, all the conservative Christians, almost all of them followed him. It was because they were promising these types of things. And I've seen this too.

There are two ways for tyrants to rule the world, and to rule you, and to have dominion over you. The first is like that of Alexander the Great, or Napoleon, or Joseph Stalin, who through military power, coercion, or tyranny subdue their enemies with such force and cruelty that their enemies tremble before they ever cross their borders. The other, though, the second way, is to create a world so small that you remove all the competition.

In this world, tyrants still rule. However, the force of their abuse is projected on maintaining the loyalty of their clan and the elevation of their axioms. In both cases, those who cross their path rarely do so without acquiescence, giving in, or abhorrence.

So this place we give to God and allow the church to be marching with that banner, God is not wanting to give that glory to anything else but himself. And I'll tell you what, I don't care if you rise up and you're a big preacher, or you're whatever, a big church, or a politics, or whatever, God will not allow it. For you shall worship no other God, for the Lord, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God.

His name is Jealous. I like this other version, I think it's the NIV, I can't remember. It says, I will not yield my glory to another.

He won't. God is God. So there he says.

Imagine this scene. And he's looking at this, and somehow he's getting that kind of dedication that purpose-driven passion that's driving this church, this people of God, there, a people dwelling alone, and not reckoning itself among the nations. They're not getting involved in the politics of these things.

Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my end be like it. Now, clean in the eyes of God. At a different time, he curses him, and he says this.

And I really want you to get this during this time here at Bible School. Let me just tell you something. Even in secular war, you know, you don't always run, and scream, and holler, and shoot people when you're out in the war.

You have your life punctuated by these times of battle and everything. But when you come together to train, or have a maneuver when you're coming together, you set apart special times when you do this. For us, that's Bible School.

Some people say, oh, I hate to go to Bible School, because I'm just going to get up, and then I'm going to come back down. Yeah, I get that, and I don't want that to happen to you. But on the other hand, it's times like this that you do business with God.

It's times like this that you say, okay, God, I'm taking inventory. I'm looking at my life. Where am I going? What do you want from me? I'm looking at the words of God.

And that's okay. Secular war does this. By all means, spiritual war should do this.

Take this time during this week, and do inventory. Because here's one of my favorite glimpses he gets of them. Again, he's trying to curse them in Numbers 23.20. Behold, listen, Balak, I'm trying to curse him.

I really am, but behold, I received a command to bless. And he has blessed, and I cannot reverse it. And get this, he has not observed iniquity in Jacob, nor has he seen wickedness in Israel.

What? Wait a minute, we just saw them all sinning over here. We know they complained here there was a plague. We know this sin.

We know all these types of things. But when they were walking under the blessing of God, when their hands were clean and their hearts were pure, and curses were trying to come, we get the glimpse of how God saw the people of God. And he says, I don't see iniquity.

I don't see it. Don't leave Bible school without this thought, without this reality that when Satan and the enemy tries to come against you, he sees no wickedness in you. You are covered by the blood of Jesus Christ.

You are forgiven, and you are walking with a clear heaven. That's what prevents the enemy from coming against you. A clean hand and a pure heart.

One of my favorite passages in Psalm 24, who shall ascend to the hill of the Lord? Or who shall stand in his holy place? He that has clean hands and a pure heart, who has not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully. Look, I know every one of us have business to do here. Every one of us do.

I remember at basic training, the drill sergeant, one of the first days, he said, every single one of you will, I don't care if you're Arnold Schwarzenegger, you're gonna leave here in better shape than when you came. Now, for the spiritual boot camp that we're trying to do here, it's a little bit more intentional, you have to be. But I'm telling you, if you apply these principles, it'll be the same for you.

God gives us a conscience. I'm gonna be talking about that on the later days, about that tools. But now, the Spirit expressly says, in the latter times, some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, speaking lies in hypocrisy, watching, having their own conscience seared with hot iron.

That's a really bad place to be in. If your conscience is seared, then you can't feel you're in trouble. This is what times like this are for.

Paul says, but we have renounced the hidden things of shame. You have shame on you today? We've renounced the hidden things of shame, not walking in craftiness nor handling the word of God deceitfully, but by manifestation of the truth, commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God. He has not observed iniquity in Jacob, nor has he seen wickedness in Israel.

Praise God. Have that before today. And then he says, right after that, the Lord his God is with him.

You know, one of the things that we have to constantly fight is not just talking about God or doctrines or histories or things or whatever, but God himself. Our salvation is not in a creed, it's not in a baptism, it's not in a sacrament. It is in God himself.

Jesus Christ himself is our salvation. And so when we have that salvation, he's recognizing the presence of God inside these people that he's looking at. Paul puts it this way, I have been crucified with Christ, my life.

It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me. In the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me. The presence of God.

If you're here and your Christianity is a creed, a theology, an agreeing to join the church, a sacrament even, let it be real that it's actually God. And when we pray here, we don't just pray for a blessing from God, we want God's promised presence. And that's what they had, and he sees it.

And then he says this, the Lord his God is with him, there's that passage, and the shout of a king is among them. When you've got all this going for you and you're walking with that kind of purity, there is a purpose in you. A rallying cry that goes, it goes.

And so he's hearing this cry, and maybe they even saw some of these battles that the people of God were doing. I did for this Bible school, I went to and looked up a few of, what are some of the few historical war cries? I found some interesting ones. The Romans had one called, they would scream, Beritas.

And apparently they would start kind of slow, Beritas, and then build it into a shout. The historian Tacitus said they got it from the Germans actually, and then adopted it with the Romans, and then finally made it, and it was a horrible scream that would finally bring fear to those that they had come across. The other one is, it was a terrible one, it is the will of God, Deus hoc vult.

When the Crusaders, by the Pope, gave them the cause to go upon the Middle East to the Holy Lands and to kill the name of God, that says that when they gave this cry, they were screaming, Deus hoc vult, for so long, that they were just shouting and shouting. I forgot for how long they did it. Oh, and the Beritas one, one of the historians mentioned that they were shouting so much that a crow, according to the story, that was going over, was stunned and fell to the ground by the force of the words, of the screaming.

I don't know if it's true or not, there it is, it's written there. Another one, that the rebel cry, one of the northern soldiers were writing in his journal about the rebel cry and what a devilish and powerful, that would bring fear to the northern troops during this time. Remember the Alamo? Of course, I grew up in Texas, I had to get this one in.

After the Texan army lost the Alamo, this cause then became their cry. This is an interesting point that I found because it was a cause that became their cry, and they would scream this. The communists would have ones like, they would literally scream out, land, bread.

And then at one time when they were taking Stalingrad, they were literally crying out, there's no land for us beyond the Volga. And I find this one interesting if you think about it. So if we go off to spiritual battle, there's nothing for us beyond the pale of the truth.

There's nothing for us beyond the church. They knew, we're gonna die here. We're gonna die.

There's nothing for us, we have to survive, and that was their cry. Bonsai was one particularly used during World War II by the Japanese soldiers as they attacked the American. And this means something like, 10,000 years.

Like a millennium, an age. And they would use it sometimes with their emperor. 10,000 years and would say this as they crashed into that.

And of course, the very chilling and terrible Nazi belt buckles and Gott mit uns. And like I said, people have always used, think they do God a service as they do these atrocities. And that's the world, that's the wickedness, that's the satanic cries of battle.

But this, he saw, was a shout of the King of God. The King God, God King, God. The Lord God is with him and the shout of a king is among them.

Do you get that? I remember right here, I would say it was about, maybe on the last row or maybe where Brother Tim is sitting there. And I can remember when I first moved here and I had not yet experienced the volume of singing that we did in those days, brothers. And I can remember, I still to this day remember this.

And I want you to get a hold of this. Singing and we're singing those hymns and it was so loud that the hymnal vibrates. Have you been in that kind of a situation before? I want you to learn to sing like that.

I never get that out of my mind. I was there and I felt the hymnal vibrating from the volume that we were singing so loud. Right here.

I'll never forget that. I think God has given us these types of passions to give glory to Him, to praise Him, to glorify Him. And when we get cynical, when we get discouraged, when we get, you know, you get bruised and all those things, we tend to lose that.

And I think it's a shame. Through praise and through the shout of the King with a clear heart and a clear conscience we can have that. And listen to this one.

So he's trying. He's giving these different attempts. And we're getting, again, this incredible spectator view of what it's like of someone trying to curse a people who's walking with God as they go.

And this one is really powerful. So he says, Explain to me, Balaam, why aren't you cursing them? Again, he says, God brings them out of Egypt. He has strength like a wild ox.

And listen to this. For there is no sorcery against Jacob, nor any divination against Israel. It now must be said of Jacob and of Israel, Oh, what God has done.

Look, a people rise like a lioness and lifts itself up like a lion. It shall not lie down until it devours the prey and drink the blood of the slain. It says here, and it gives us an indication, that when they were walking with a clear conscience, and they were there on purpose, separated unto God, walking with holiness, walking with a clear conscience, that when he would try to curse them, no sorcery could penetrate them.

Talk about spiritual warfare. This is the shield. And so this is something that we don't want to lose out on.

For there is no sorcery against Jacob, nor any divination against Israel. This is a powerful thing. So, we're talking about a people that were invincible.

Absolutely invincible. There's nothing. Once they were walking in this way, there's nothing that could stop them.

Absolutely nothing. They were, number one, they were forgiven. You're here today, and are you walking with, as the road, excuse me, has the road made you discouraged? And you've cursed God in your heart? There's forgiveness for that by looking to the raised serpent in the wilderness.

They were pure in God's eye. They were faithful, practicing the will of God after they were walking in faith, and they became faithful. They were taking one battle after another, and one battle after another.

Number three, they were holy. They were involved in the things of this world. However you define that, your definition of holiness is going to be different than mine.

Your idea of separation, of where you draw those lines, is going to be different than mine. But there should be those lines. It's not my line.

It's your line and the line with you and the Holy Spirit and the people that you're accountable to and walking with. But that line is your business, but there's got to be a sense of dedication in walking to God. Not man, but God.

They had that. Number four, they were victorious. They were experiencing victory.

And number five, they were untouchable to the attacks of Satan. They were invincible. They could not fail.

There's nothing, right? Except, and then you turn the page to chapter 25, verse 1, of Numbers. Now Israel remained in the Acacia Grove and the people began to commit harlotry with the women of Moab. And it goes on to say that they took them and they taught them and the women seduced them and the men seduced the women, I'm sure, and all this.

And then there was actually led them to idle sacrifice. And here God, who was walking with them and doing all these things, a pillar of fire by night and a cloud by day, and they're walking now unfaithful. But now once they stopped and started to get bored and started to experiment a little bit, they lost it.

How? The plague came. It killed 24,000 people. And to finally, with all the different debaucheries that were happening and everything, Phineas actually comes out and stabs through two of them who were in the midst of the wickedness.

And finally, from that gruesome moment, God says the plague is ended. And curiously it says that Phineas atoned for them in that. And it stopped.

But how did this happen? What happened? It's important to see what happened because this, take heed, those who have faith, take heed, lest we too can also fall. And as we've seen, many of our friends and every one of you, I know you can give a, tell me, I know this brother, a friend of mine, he was walking in faith and now he's gone. Don't give up on him.

But look at what happened. And Moses said to them, we get a little indication from some things. As we turn to chapter 31, when he was complaining about some of the women they did not put to death, he says, have you kept all the women alive? Look, these women caused the children of Israel through the counsel of Balaam to trespass against the Lord and the incident of Peor.

So he says here, we get a little indication that Balaam did something to give counsel to seduce them. Peter and Jude, we get some other indication. It's really important because we get to look in on how Satan attacks you and how Satan distracts you.

And in 2 Peter 2.15, it says, they have left the straight load and have gone astray following the road of Balaam. Now, straight, and this means, you know, the narrow gate. I love there's a passage in the Martyr's Mirror that said, the martyrs went through a gate so straight, went through a gate so straight, so narrow, that they left their skin on the post.

And so the idea of just, but 2 Peter, he's saying, they have left the straight load, straight road, and have gone astray following the road of Balaam, son of Beor, who loved the wages of doing wrong. And Jude, it says, woe to them, they have gone the way of Cain, and abandoned themselves to Balaam's heir for the sake of gain, and perished in Korah's rebellion. But Revelation, I think, gives us the best indication of how, of what happened here.

And Jesus is speaking, and he says, but I have a few things against you. You have some there who hold the teaching of Balaam, now watch, who taught Balak to put a stumbling block before the people of Israel, so that they would eat food sacrificed to idols, and engage in sexual immorality. Interesting, this prophet gone bad, at least seer gone bad, it's actually one of the first prophecies in the Bible about the coming of the Messiah, is one of those moments there in Numbers where he speaks of.

This man had something given to him by God, but he used it and taught the government how to deceive the church. And I find that very fascinating. Balaam, who taught Balak to put a stumbling block before the people of Israel.

There are many things coming against the people of God, and the attacks are everywhere, and sometimes even the church helps that out. We give into it, and we end up helping the enemy come against us. But understand, what we see here is an invincible people.

People of God, invincible. Now, seduced, lost. And those kinds of seductions are coming at us at a rapid pace, a rapid pace.

We're going to be talking about some of those. But, just like David when he stayed back and didn't go off to battle, just like him here, now Israel remained. Israel remained.

I do think there's something about the church having to stay in battle on the move. And that as soon as we start saying, you know, I don't know, I, I, you know, that was a lot of hard work, and I, I think, you know, we've kind of matured now, and maybe we were a little too this or a little too that. As soon as we start just settling into that, you're, you just start playing weird games with your mind and start coming up with weird excuses of why you need that extra boat and why you need that whatever you do.

And from there, then it leads to these compromises. It's a pattern we're seeing in the Word of God that repeats every time. We have to stay in battle.

We're staying, we were meant to stay in battle. Do you remember the, there was an ancient, probably about 500 B.C., there was a slave who actually wrote one of the, the oldest books of antiquity that we still have, the Fables of Aesop. And in this Fables of Aesop, Aesop's Fables, there's this parable of the North Wind and the Sun.

Anybody heard this story? So the North Wind and the Sun are having a fight about who can knock this guy's coat off. I bet you I can get his coat off, says the Sun. Ah, no way, says the North Wind.

I can get that off. Stand back. I'll show you how it's done.

So the North Wind then gives it a try. So the North Wind then takes this traveler he sees by and starts blowing on him and blowing on him and blowing on him. And what does the guy do? He just takes his coat and he fastens it around him and he gets, holds it harder and harder and harder and finally the wind is wore out and can't get his coat off.

And he goes, ah, I get it. What are you going to do, Sun? I mean, what are you going to do? So the Sun says, no, I got this. So he starts shining on him and warming him and making him feel very comfortable.

And so the traveler just leans on a tree and says, whew, yeah, this is a nice day. And he takes his coat off. This is the way Satan has repeatedly come against the church.

We do well in persecution. We do well when someone, we have a fight to fight. But when we remain in the Acacia Grove, when we remain and start getting lax, and these types of things, we don't do well.

And we tend to then compromise and fall every time. Is this you? It's absolutely certainly me. I fight it every day.

Every day. Remember in the Pilgrim's Progress, I think the interpreter says, the hardest test is the enchanted ground. Think about it.

Take all the giant of despair, you can take all the different things, but just lay in the pasture. That's so easy. Let's pray this prayer this week.

Psalm 13.3. Consider and hear me, O Lord, my God. Enlighten my eyes. In other words, wake me up, lest I sleep the sleep of death.

These Bible schools are meant for us to take inventory and to pray that God would open your eyes so that you don't fall asleep and die. All right. So in summary, let's wrap it up.

In summary, I want you to remember this, these passages of Scripture. In Numbers 23.9, this is the spectator's view of the people of God and what I want you to get from this example there. Number 23.9, they were a people dwelling alone, not reckoning itself among the nations.

They were separated unto God. Number two, he has not observed iniquity in Jacob, nor has he seen wickedness in Israel. They were a forgiven, redeemed, born again people of God.

Clear heaven, a clear conscience. Numbers 23.21. Number 23.21, the Lord, His God is with them and the shout of a king is among them. I wonder if I messed up the numbers there.

I'll have to look. The Lord, He is also that He had the presence of God, not just a theology of God, not just a creed or something, but God's presence is with Him. And from that, the shout of a king was among them.

Numbers 23, they were protected from the spiritual war that comes against them. There's no sorcery against Jacob, nor any divination against Israel. And now must be said of Jacob and of Israel, oh, what

God has done.

But, and also remember in Numbers 25, now Israel remained in the Acacia Grove. And let's make sure that that doesn't define us and how we're going to live our life. But I'll tell you this, don't you think for a moment your whole life, you have to keep fighting.

It's when we give up is when we fall. And if you, and if sometime you fall in your life, can I put something very deep inside of you in the back of your mind or your heart? There's hope. There's hope.

And I don't care what happens from here, don't ever let Satan tell you that, that there's not hope. That's the accuser of the brethren. And Jesus Christ can save you, He can take you, He can sanctify you, He can lift you up and He can restore the wasted years.

But the canker worm and the palmer worm and all those things have destroyed. God, there's hope. So let's pray and ask God to speak to us this week.

Dear Heavenly Father, I thank You, Lord, for the Word of God. I thank You, Lord, that You've given us this amazing example. And I do pray, Lord, that You would raise up a mighty army in the people of God here.

I pray that these young people would just be enlivened by the Holy Spirit. Not just a feeling, but Your actual presence, God. I pray that You would send grace, that You would send Your Spirit, and when Your Spirit comes You will convict the world of sin and of righteousness and of judgment.

And so I pray, God, that where our hands are needing cleanse, show me, Lord, show all of us that we all leave here better cleansed and ready for service. Dear God, be with every one of us and sanctify us and make us ready for work. Lord, make us free from the attacks of Satan and the satanic holds that he tries to come onto us.

And Lord, make sure You please give us inspiration to keep active and to keep following You, that this one thing we do is to follow You with all our life. We thank You, Lord, for this Word. In Jesus' name we pray.

Amen.

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