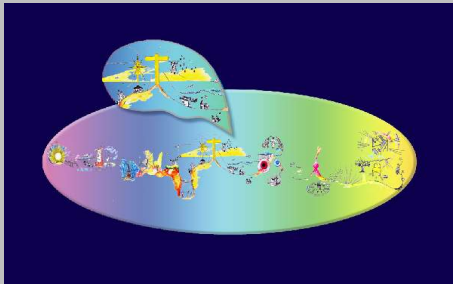


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## Eternal Fellowship News Bulletin

We believe in one GOD, in three persons; FATHER, SON and HOLY SPIRIT. We regard the Bible (both Hebrew Bible and New Testaments) as the only infallible authoritative WORD OF GOD.

HULDAH MINISTRY aims to return to the Word Of God, founded on Hebrew background and to interpret it from Hebraic perspective, acknowledging that Jesus is a Jew and the Jewish-ness of His teaching as a continuation from the Hebrew Bible. The Ministry also aims to put His teaching into practice, to have a closer relationship with the Lord, Jesus Christ, and to regularly have a Christian fellowship so that this-worldly kingdom of God will materialise in the midst of the followers of Jesus here and now, as well as earnestly seeking Christ's Return to establish the otherworldly Kingdom of God on earth.

*All activities are free of charge and no obligation whatever. Just enjoy our fellowship!*

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HULDAH MINISTRY

# LETTER TO THE BROTHERS AND SISTERS IN CHRIST

## 【 SPIRITUAL WARFARE -3- 】

*For I do not want you to be ignorant of the fact, brothers, that our fathers were all under the cloud and that they all passed through the sea. They were all baptised into Moses in the cloud and in the sea. They all ate the same spiritual food and drank the same spiritual drink; they drank from the spiritual rock that accompanied them, and that rock was Christ. Nevertheless, God was not pleased with most of them; their bodies were scattered over the desert.*

*Now these things occurred as examples to keep us from setting our hearts on evil things as they did. Do not be idolaters, as some of them were; as it is written: "The people sat down to eat and drink and got up to indulge in pagan revelry." We should not commit sexual immorality, as some of them did—and in one day twenty-three thousands of them died. We should not test the Lord, as some of them did—and were killed by snakes. And do not grumble, as some of them did—and were killed by the destroying angel.*

*These things happened to them as examples and were written down as warnings for us, on whom the fulfilment of the ages has come. So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don't fall! No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.*

1Corinthians 10:1-13.

*By the meekness and gentleness of Christ, I appeal to you—I, Paul, who am "timid" when face to face with you, but "bold" when away! I beg you that when I come I may not have to be as bold as I expect to be towards some people who think that we live by the standards of this world. For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against*

*the knowledge of God, and we obedient to Christ. And we will be ready to punish every act of disobedience, once your obedience is complete.* **2Corinthians 10:1-6.**

According to Paul's interpretation of the Exodus, God's chosen people Israel received the following great privileges in the wilderness after the Exodus by God's grace: First, **God's secure protection** from the pursuing enemy by the pillar of cloud and fire throughout the passage through the Red Sea and the wandering in the wilderness. Secondly, **the authority and the leadership of Moses**, an earnest intercessor, with whom the people could identify themselves with a united heart. The cover given by the divine cloud and the miraculous deliverance through the water of the Red Sea were both the means by which they were baptised into Moses. Thus, the Israelites were brought under Moses' authority and leadership. Here, Paul reminds us of the baptism into Christ, the greatest intercessor, with whom we are also identified because we, believers in Christ, are all one in Him by 'putting Him on'. The characteristic Pauline expression of the meaning of the "faith-union with Christ" in baptism; "having clothed oneself with Christ" in Galatians 3:27 is significant because changing our clothes of the old life to that of Christ's righteousness is a figure of the inner spiritual change. In other words, Christian baptism is not a kind of charm of salvation but a means to be brought under the leadership of Christ. Thirdly, the other privilege granted by God was **the supernatural provision of food and drink in the wilderness**. Wherever the Israelites were, their food supply never failed because '*the spiritual rock*' that provided them with water accompanied them. The term; '*the spiritual rock that accompanied them*' is worth noting as interestingly, there was a Jewish rabbinic tradition of "a movable rock with its well", in which it was believed that after the miraculous provision of water that gushed out of the rock by Moses' strike, the rock followed the Israelites to continue to provide them with water. Henceforth, in such a way, blessings followed the Israelites. As '*the rock*' is apparently Christ, Paul clearly refers to Christ as the source of the people's blessings and even at the time of the Old Testament Christ pre-existed to bless them. Nevertheless, all these spiritual privileges did not turn the Israelites to God, the source of all blessings, and the majority of them continued to displease Him. As a result, they were overthrown in the wilderness.

Paul, addressing the Corinthians who were misusing their liberty in Christ because of a shallow and even wrong understanding of the nature of Christian baptism and the Lord's Supper, gave warnings against their sinful desires for evil things. Showing historical examples of the Israel's failure, Paul counts the following in a list of evil things.

(1) **Idolatry:** The ancient Israelites took part in sacrifices offered to the golden calf when '*the people sat down to eat and drink and got up to indulge in pagan revelry.*' They should have realised the fact that '*the sacrifice of pagans (were) offered to demons, not to God,*' (1Co.10:20) and such a practice would correspond to a participation with demons, and worse still, such a merry-making of dancing before the idols would inevitably lead to immorality.

(2) **Sexual immorality:** Once the Israelites were seduced by the Moabites, and began to indulge in sexual immorality with Moabite women, the consequence was judgment by plague. As a result, 23,000 Israelites perished in a day.

(3) **Putting the Lord to the test:** When the Israelites left Mount Hor and travelled down south by the way to Sea of Reeds they became impatient because they disagreed with Moses' decision of not engaging Edom, their brother nation in battle and also with the way that the Lord was directing them, and they complained about the food and the water. In response to their blasphemous contempt for the heavenly bread '*manna*' as a symbol of God's grace, God sent venomous desert snakes to kill them by a burning bite. Many died. In passing, there is a following salvific episode in this incident. When the people cried out to Moses, their intercessor, by confessing their sin, God, answering Moses' plea, presented a very peculiar way of deliverance of the people from the curse. Moses was instructed to make an image of a snake and to put it on a pole. The people who had been bitten were encouraged to step forward in faith to look up at the bronze snake and to live. It was a test of faith to follow a very simple invitation to look up at it and live. Isaiah prophesied: '*Turn to me and be saved, all you ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is no other.*' (Is.45:22) and Jesus related the incident of lifting up the snake to His life-giving salvation on the cross: '*No-one has ever gone into heaven except the one who came from heaven—the Son of Man. Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the desert, so the Son of man must be lifted up, that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life.*' (Jn.3:13-15). This typology was enigmatically and paradoxically fulfilled by Christ's death on the cross and His glorious resurrection. As Paul stated: '*For what the law was powerless to do in that it was weakened by the sinful nature, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful man to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in sinful man, in order that the righteous requirements of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the sinful nature but according to the spirit.*' (Ro.8:3-4, Line added), so the dead corpse on the cross was the death of flesh which Satan had ruled over since the Fall. Accordingly, the bronze snake on the pole in the wilderness was a very type of the death of Satan himself, who had with hindsight, unwittingly been trapped

within man's flesh. God paradoxically accomplished this unexpected victory through His begotten Son's death, who had put on man's filthy flesh as a hundred percent complete man while He was on earth.

(4) **Grumbling:** After God's severe judgment upon the revolts led by Korah the Levite and by other laymen recorded in Numbers 16, the whole Israelite community blamed Moses and Aaron, their leaders for the death of Korah's group with grumbling. Their continued rebellion caused God to send plague and as a result 14,700 people died. The plague only stopped spreading by Aaron's intercession. But for Moses' and Aaron's intercession the entire nation might have been destroyed by God's wrath.

Those incidents that happened to the ancient Israel point out several things for our instruction: First, rebellion against God and His appointed leaders will be met by divine judgment. Secondly, we believers in Christ are in a vantage point of learning from Israel's experiences. Thirdly, even a Christian is not exempt from temptation, testing and trials. Rather being involved in a spiritual warfare is a proof of one's status as God's true children. By overcoming spiritual warfares, each of His children will be strengthened, and there will always be a way out to enable them to resist evil things. In the passage explored above, Paul clearly depicts two distinct people of God, the very minority of whom barely survived and the majority of whom perished in the wilderness because of their desire for evil things. A question naturally arises out of this; what made the two groups so different in their lives, despite their common experiences, privileges and blessings of God under the same condition. An answer might be found in the other passage in 2 Corinthians 10, quoted at the beginning as well.

There is a vital issue that should be dealt with in our lives, even after accepting Jesus as our Lord, and whether or not we are committed believers, and which God wants us to overcome throughout the pilgrimage of our faith life. It is only when we have completely conquered it that we are utterly and literally able to be set free from any bondage of the devil and any hindrance against God's abundance. Paul called this issue as '**strongholds**' erected in us which need to be demolished. In the Scripture, the term is used in both negative and positive ways. David Devenish who studied the issue in detail puts it well: "Ancient fortified cities in Old Testament times were built with a wall around the outside. This would not be very practical today, with aeroplanes, bombs and guns, but then it was a powerful defence. Such walls were strong enough to keep out all but the most determined invader, but the inhabitants would also build a **secondary defence** in the centre of the city in the shape of a tower. This was called a "stronghold", and could be defended by just a few soldiers, so that if an attack came, the people of the city could crowd in for protection, confident that the tower could be easily defended. However, this wasn't always successful, and even the stronghold's defences could be breached...the book of Proverbs says, 'A wise man attacks the city of the mighty and pulls down the stronghold in which they trust.' The idea behind this is that sometimes only the outer wall of a city would be taken but a wise general attacking that city would also pull down the strong hold, so that his enemies had no defences to hide behind. I believe that **many people come to Christ, give their lives to Him, and in that sense the outer wall of their life is taken. However, the stronghold is not taken and that stronghold represents a way of thinking from before the time they were saved.** It will have been influenced by their culture, their past sins, their upbringing, experiences and events that have happened to them. In other words, **they are still influenced by strongholds of the enemy.**" (p71-72, "*Demolishing Strongholds*" Authentic Media, Emphasis added).

The Corinth of Paul's day was full of vice, mingled with Greek- and Roman- cultures. The very ordinary people in the Corinthian church, according to Paul's description: '**Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential; not many were of noble birth,**' (1Co.1:26) had been challenged by a confrontation with the disintegration of morality, philosophical ideas and the influential Gnosticism. Above all, there were very influential false apostles, so-called '**super-apostles**' who had infiltrated the Corinthian church to serve their own ends and who were very efficient at discrediting Paul and the true gospel Paul preached. They had impressed the Corinthians to interpret '**the meekness and gentleness of Christ**' reflected in Paul, Christ's real apostle as "some deficiency of his character such as lack of personal strength or timidity". Compared with Paul, such false apostles were very attractive and impressive with the exhibition of charismatic gifts and charms. Paul, however, denounced these as "worldly, soulish weapons." Some Bible teacher depicts a list of what worldly people admire in this world; human cleverness, brilliant rhetoric, impressive preaching, good administration, strong personality, personal charm, physical beauty and so on. However, all these are useless for believers in Christ to fight against evil things. While the false apostles were very much alive with their charismatic show of spiritual gifts, signs and wonders, they seemed to lose touch with reality, instead living out their lives in a super-spiritual realm. Their soulish weapons were very deceptive and indeed, many

were deceived. Nevertheless, what we should urgently be equipped with are real weapons for the realities of spiritual warfare. We need to fight a spiritual warfare as our daily experiences in our everyday lives.

By Greek standards and the standards of this world, Paul was utterly unimpressive in his way of teaching as well as his physical appearance (10:10). However, no matter how viciously he and his authority were discredited by the false apostles, Paul never shrunk from their slanderous criticism against his ministry among the Corinthian Christians for the sake of the true gospel. Acknowledging that the real battle is spiritual, although believers in Christ still have to live in the flesh while living in this world, Paul dismissed their undermining of his ministry. Instead, He made his stance clear. Despite the false apostles' high approval by the Corinthians, their weapons of outward show were of no interest to Paul. The weapons that he was interested in and used to fight with were concerned with '**demolishing strongholds.**' Strongholds are, in other words, '**arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God,**' i.e., wrong thoughts that should be taken captive to Christ. The terms that Paul used to express '**strongholds**' needing to be pulled down suggest some powerful forces working behind the scene, i.e., something demonic that would resist and hinder God's rule. Here Paul claims that unless these strongholds, i.e., wrong thought-patterns, ideas and practices against God, which the devil cunningly establishes within us are completely demolished, our obedience to Christ remains incomplete. To put it differently, if we are not completely submitted to Christ's lordship in every area of our lives, it means that we are still dependent on ourselves but not God, which would allow the devil and his demons to continually influence and dominate us. Even after we accept Christ as our Lord, unless we are fully equipped with real weapons of divine power, we cannot be set free from the strongholds. Paul warns us of how powerless the soulish weapons are against the real spiritual warfare. Taking other passages about such false apostles, teachers and prophets into consideration, the useless and harmful ways the super-apostles adopted might be summed up in the following list: ①Worldly weapons designed to impress ②Big show to make a name for their own ends ③Self-commendation ④Manipulation ⑤Rituals ⑥Arguments without practice ⑦Special knowledge given to the selected ⑧Supernatural experiences ⑨Overruns into demonic realm. Not knowingly, we tend to still remain bound by strongholds as a result of past sins even after we have accepted Christ as our own Lord.

This explains well why the majority of the ancient Israelites had to perish in the wilderness despite their privileges as God's chosen nation. Because they never submitted their whole beings to God's lordship, Satan took advantage of their thoughts, emotions and practices that had not been taken captive to the Lord and established a wrong thinking system, i.e., strongholds in themselves, in culture, in worldview, in philosophies, in religions, in society, in education, in up-bringing and so on. Henceforth, they were brought into sinful bondage and came to suffer illnesses, emotional, mental and spiritual problems, and demonic oppression. We should not follow the example of the grumbling and rebellious ancient Israel. But how should we guard our hearts against the enemy? It is a tall order not to allow the devil to get a grip on us in the first stage, and never to give in to the ill desires of the flesh and the patterns of this world, but to be consistent in resisting the enemy by first wholeheartedly submitting to the Lord. The following list based on David Devenish's study on that issue, might be helpful for self examination, to assess whether or not you may have allowed the devil to influence you through strongholds that may have been built up through past sin. ①**Occult activity**, which is strictly forbidden in the Scripture and which involves direct contact with evil spirits: **Fortune telling**, through ouija boards, tarot cards, crystal ball, palm-reading and so on, **Spiritualism** such as horoscopes, automatic writings, mediums and clairvoyance and so on, **Magic** including both black and white magic, table-lifting, casting spells and hexes and so on, **Mystical activity** such as transcendental meditation, mental telepathy, thought transference and so on, **Satanism** and **Idol-worship** ②**Superstition**, which is passed from generation to generation and which binds people to legalism and ritualism ③**New Age beliefs**, which has a strong link to Hinduism and other Eastern religion ④**False religions** ⑤**Religious legalism**, which is warned as 'doctrines of demons' in the Scripture ⑥**Freemasonry**, which is a secret society that deceptively attracts people because of their love of money and power ⑦**Sin carried out in past generations** ⑧**Sexual sins**, which are sins against our own bodies that ought to exist to honour God and thus, which is serious because our bodies were not only bought at a price by Christ but are the temple of the Holy Spirit ⑨**Soul ties** as a result of sexual sin committed in the past, which involve emotions and spirits as well as physical bodies. Such unsolved spiritual bonds would form a foothold for the enemy ⑩**Pornography**, which many Christians are still secretly involved in. Sexual cravings can lead to addiction, unless drastic action is taken to demolish them ⑪**Auto-sexuality**, which is sex with oneself solely for self-indulgence and self-gratification ⑫**Homosexuality and lesbianism**, whose activity is sinful, whatever arguments and reasons are claimed, according to the Scripture ⑬**Abortion**, which is not only morally wrong but also involve giving over to demonic forces ⑭**Rebellion** ⑮**Addictive behaviour** such as alcoholism.