

Message Six

The Descent of the Mighty Ones

Scripture Reading: Joel 3:11b; S. S. 3:7-8; 4:8; 6:4, 10; Eph. 6:10-20

I. “There cause Your mighty ones to descend, O Jehovah!”—Joel 3:11b:

- A. The mighty ones are Christ’s overcomers, who will return with Christ as His army to defeat Antichrist at the battle of Armageddon and who will be His co-kings in the millennium—Rev. 17:14; 19:11-21; 2:26-27; 20:4, 6; Matt. 19:28.
- B. Christ will come back, descending with His overcomers as His army, to defeat Antichrist and his army—Joel 3:11b; 2 Thes. 2:8; Rev. 19:11-21.

II. The mighty ones, the overcomers, understand the necessity of spiritual warfare—Eph. 6:10-13; Rev. 12:1-17; 19:11-21:

- A. Spiritual warfare is necessary because Satan’s will is set against God’s will—Gen. 3:15; Isa. 14:12-14; Matt. 6:10; 7:21:
 - 1. Spiritual warfare has its source in the conflict between the divine will and the satanic will.
 - 2. God wants His creature *man* to deal with His fallen creature *Satan*; for this, the human will must stand with the divine will and fight to subdue the satanic will—Gen. 1:26; Matt. 26:39; 12:30; 7:21; Rev. 12:11.
- B. The purpose of spiritual warfare is to bring in the kingdom of God—11:15:
 - 1. Spiritual warfare is the warfare between the kingdom of God and the kingdom of Satan—Matt. 12:26, 28.
 - 2. The kingdom of God is the exercise of the divine will and the overthrowing of the power of Satan by the power of God—6:10; 12:28.
 - 3. Through prayer the church must release the power of the kingdom of God on the earth—6:9-10, 13; 18:19; Rev. 8:3-5.
- C. The warfare between the church and Satan is a battle between us who love the Lord and who are in His church and the evil powers in the heavenlies—Eph. 6:12:
 - 1. The rulers, the authorities, and the world-rulers of darkness are the rebellious angels who followed Satan in his rebellion against God and who now rule in the heavenlies over the nations of the world—Col. 1:13; Dan. 10:20.
 - 2. We need to realize that our warfare is not against human beings but against the evil spirits, the evil powers, in the heavenlies—Eph. 6:12.

III. The mighty ones, the overcomers, realize that spiritual warfare is based on the victory of Christ—Heb. 2:14; Col. 2:15; 1 John 3:8:

- A. The starting point of spiritual warfare is standing upon the victory of Christ; it is seeing that Christ has already overcome—S. S. 4:8; Rev. 3:21; 5:5-6:
 - 1. The Son of God was manifested to destroy the works of the devil—1 John 3:8.
 - 2. In His incarnation and human living Christ defeated Satan during the temptation in the wilderness—Matt. 4:1-11.

3. Through death the Lord Jesus destroyed the devil, who has the might of death; He abolished Satan, brought him to naught—Heb. 2:14.
 4. God openly shamed the evil angels, triumphing over them in the cross of Christ—Col. 2:15.
 5. In the Spirit as His divinity, Christ proclaimed, to the evil spirits in the abyss, His victory over Satan on the cross—1 Pet. 3:18-19.
 6. The resurrected Christ has the keys of death and of Hades—Rev. 1:18.
 7. In His ascension Christ led a train of vanquished foes; He rescued us from Satan's captivity and took us to Himself—Eph. 4:8.
 8. In God's universal administration Christ, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, is the Victor and the Ruler of the kings of the earth—Rev. 5:5-6; 1:5.
- B. The work of the church on earth is to maintain Christ's victory; the Lord has already won the battle, and the church is here to maintain His victory—Eph. 6:11, 13.

IV. The mighty ones, the overcomers, are “empowered in the Lord and in the might of His strength”—v. 10:

- A. To fight against God's enemy, we need to be empowered with the surpassing greatness of the power that raised Christ from the dead and seated Him in the heavenlies, far above the spirits in the air—1:19-21; 3:16.
- B. Our need to be thus empowered indicates that we cannot fight the spiritual warfare in ourselves or by our own strength but only in the Lord and in the might of His strength—6:10.

V. The mighty ones, the overcomers, conquer the satanic chaos in the old creation and carry out the divine economy for the new creation—1 Tim. 1:4; Eph. 1:10; 3:10; 2 Cor. 5:17; Gal. 6:15:

- A. The overcomers conquer the destructive satanic chaos and triumph in the constructive divine economy—1 Tim. 1:4.
- B. Instead of being delivered out of the present chaos, the mighty ones conquer the chaos by the processed and consummated Triune God as the all-sufficient grace—2 Tim. 1:9, 15; 2:1, 17-18; 4:22.

VI. The mighty ones, the overcomers, are victorious over the attack of death—Rev. 2:8-11; Matt. 16:18; Heb. 2:14-15; 2 Cor. 1:9; Phil. 3:10-11:

- A. Matthew 16:18 shows us from what source the attack upon the church will come—“the gates of Hades,” that is, death:
 1. Satan's special object today is to spread death within the church.
 2. Satan's greatest fear with regard to the church is her resistance to his power of death and her being in resurrection—1 Pet. 1:3; Eph. 2:6.
- B. To those who overcome the attack of death, Christ will give the crown of life—the overcoming strength that is the power of the resurrection life—Rev. 2:10b; Phil. 3:10.

VII. The mighty ones, the overcomers, are the victory of the overcoming Christ—S. S. 3:7-8:

- A. The bed in verse 7 is for rest and victory in the night, signifying the church age, during the time of spiritual warfare, signified by the sixty mighty men who surround the bed.
- B. Christ's lover is among the sixty mighty men, indicating that she is a leading overcomer, fighting for Christ in order to keep Him at rest during the fighting.
- C. The lover of Christ is the victory of the overcoming Christ, full of the power of the overcomers among God's elect that carries Christ even in times of difficulties—v. 7.
- D. The overcomers are experts in war, fighting with their weapons at the time of alarms—v. 8; 2 Cor. 10:3-5; Eph. 6:10-12; 1 Tim. 1:18; 2 Tim. 4:7.
- E. "Your neck is like the tower of David, / Built for an armory: / A thousand bucklers hang on it, / All the shields of the mighty men"—S. S. 4:4:
 - 1. The neck signifies the human will under God; the lover of Christ is beautiful in her having a will that is submissive to Christ (neck like the tower of David) and that is rich in the defending power (bucklers and shields of the mighty men).
 - 2. After our will has been subdued, it will be strong in resurrection and like the tower of David, the armory for the spiritual warfare; the weapons for spiritual warfare are kept in our subdued and resurrected will—Eph. 6:10; 2 Cor. 10:3-5.

VIII. The mighty ones, the overcomers, are "as beautiful...as Tirzah, / As lovely as Jerusalem, / As terrible as an army with banners"—S. S. 6:4, 10:

- A. When the overcoming lover of Christ becomes one with God to be God's dwelling place, in the eyes of God she is as beautiful as Tirzah and as lovely as Jerusalem; however, to the enemy she is as terrible as an army with banners—vv. 4, 10.
- B. The building of God is always an army; when we become a city to the Lord, we are an army to the enemy—vv. 4, 10:
 - 1. Building cannot be separated from spiritual warfare; wherever the building is, there is the battle—Neh. 4.
 - 2. Fighting always accompanies the building, and the building always brings in victory in battle—Matt. 16:18-19.
- C. A terrible army signifies that the mighty ones, the Lord's overcomers, terrify God's enemy, Satan—S. S. 6:4, 10:
 - 1. Satan is afraid of only one kind of people—those who do not love their soul-life—Rev. 12:11; Matt. 16:25-26.
 - 2. The enemy is frightened by the church that is built up as the city of God—Neh. 6:15-16; Psa. 102:12-16.
 - 3. The demons and the evil angels are terrified of the one new man created by Christ on the cross—Eph. 2:15-16; Col. 2:14-15.
 - 4. Satan is not afraid of individualistic Christians, even if they number in the thousands, but is terrified of the church as the Body of Christ, the corporate warrior fighting against him and his kingdom—Eph. 6:10-20.

IX. The mighty ones, the overcomers, fight the battle in the Body—vv. 10-20:

- A. Spiritual warfare is not an individual matter; it is a matter of the Body, the new man—1:22-23; 4:24; 6:13.
- B. The whole armor of God is for the Body, not for individuals; only the corporate warrior can wear the whole armor of God—vv. 13-17.
- C. The church is a corporate warrior, and the believers together make up this corporate warrior; after we have been formed corporately into an army, we will be able to fight against God's enemy—Num. 36:13; Deut. 1:21; Josh. 1:2-3.