

THE LAMB'S WAR

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BIBLICAL BACKGROUND

In the Old Testament we find the origins of using the lamb as a symbol for the people of God. In Exodus 12:1-13¹ we see the lamb standing for the children of Israel escaping bondage and becoming as a people unto God. In the story of Abraham and Isaac we find the beginnings of the willingness of the father to sacrifice his son. However, because the time was not yet ready for this, a ram was provided as a substitute.² Note the prophetic statement "God will provide Himself a lamb." John the Baptist announced the fulfillment of this prophecy in John 1:29: *And this is the record of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, Who art thou?* and again in 1:36: *And looking upon Jesus as he walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God!*

In Isaiah chapter 53 there is further prophecy of the Lamb being sacrificed. Verse 7 reads: *He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.* This theme is picked up in the New Testament in Acts 8:32-3 (... *He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and like a lamb dumb before his shearer, so opened he not his mouth: In his humiliation his judgment was taken away: and who shall declare his generation? for his life is taken from the earth.*) and in 1Peter1:18-19. (*Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.*)

In the book of Revelation, the use of the figure of the Lamb of God for Jesus Christ reaches its fullest development, as for example, *Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing. And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.* (Rev 5:12-13) .In Rev 6:15-17³ we see the struggle of the forces of this world with the Lamb. The word "wrath" conveys intense anger with elements of rejection for an unacceptable offense. Rev 12:10-11⁴ tells of the struggle between the Lamb and the accuser. Later⁵ Satan, called "the dragon," gives the beast (the force of evil) power to make war with the saints and the Lamb, but eventually (Rev 14:8) Babylon, the place of the anti-Christ falls. In Rev 7:9-17⁶ salvation comes to those *which come out of great tribulation and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.* There is a song of praise to God and the Lamb in Rev 15:3-4⁷. The marriage supper of the Lamb and the bride (the church) is announced⁸. The kingdom of God or the city of God, also called New Jerusalem, has no need of an outward temple or outward light, for the Lamb is both the temple and the light⁹. Rev 22:1-5¹⁰ celebrates the glory of the new life in Christ.

EARLY FRIENDS

The first generation of Friends developed the term "Lamb's War" to portray the struggle of Christ with the forces of Satan or evil. For early Friends this was not an abstract theological concept but a reality that they experienced themselves, immersed in this epic struggle that was

occurring on a cosmic, national and individual level. As Wilmer Cooper (in *A Living Faith*, pg. 115) wrote, “Fox used the language of Revelation to detail his interpretation of history. For example, the whore of Babylon¹¹ symbolized alienation from God caused by the Antichrist. The dragon¹² represented Satan. The beast in Rev 13 continued the dragon image of evil, and Fox linked this to the false church of persecution, swearing, oaths, tithes and false teaching. The woman in Rev 12 was the image of the true church, which had been forced into the wilderness by Satan, thus marking the apostasy of the church from the time of Christ to the seventeenth century.”

This struggle touched all areas of early Friends’ life – personal relationships, economic relationships, political relationships, religious relationships, etc. Friends came into conflict with the state when they were obedient to Christ’s injunction not to take oaths and to swear not. They refused military service and the payment of tithes. They avoided the vain social customs of their day. They stood for honest dealings and forthrightness in speech. They avoided the vain amusements, diversions and fashions of the day, choosing clothing that was simple, modest and a witness for their faith. They took seriously scriptural injunctions¹³ in their moral behavior.

For first-generation Friends, the Lamb’s War was a struggle of an absolute nature, with no room for compromise and lukewarm commitment. Early Friends did not see themselves as initiating the struggle. They understood that it was led by Jesus Christ and that they were His followers being led into this great and epic spiritual battle.¹⁴ It was a holy war. The weapons provided by God were spiritual in nature, as opposed to the carnal weapons used by the Lamb’s opponents.¹⁵ Early Friends felt sustained in absolute obedience to Jesus Christ by the power of His cross. In his Epistle 222 (1662), Fox urges “you must bow at the cross of Christ, which is the power of God...for who bends, and submits, and yields, and bows to the power of God within...which power of God keeps the mind over all outward things, in the everlasting power of God above them.” However, at the end of his lifetime, Fox began to sense that a sea change was occurring among Friends.

SEA CHANGE

A sea change occurred in England in 1689 when William and Mary replaced James II on the throne. The new monarchs believed in religious toleration, and with the passage of the Acts of Toleration, Friends found permanent relief from the great suffering that they had endured. The last of the leadership of the first generation of Friends were passing on at this time, and a new outlook spread among Friends.

With a softening of the effort of the state to use governmental powers to enforce a state religion and to stamp out religious dissent, came a softening of the stridency, absoluteness and seeming radicalism of the first generation of Friends, ushering in an era that is now called Quietism. In response to the Acts of Toleration, London YM in 1689 issued the following advice: “Walk wisely and circumspectly toward all men, in the peaceable Spirit of Jesus Christ, giving no offense nor occasions to those in outward government, nor way to any controversies, heats, or distractions of this world, about kingdoms thereof. But pray for the good of all; and submit all to that Divine power and wisdom which rules over the kingdoms of men.” (quoted in Walter Williams, *The Rich Heritage of Quakerism*, p119) The leadership three years later advised, “Let all study to be quiet and mind their own business, in God’s holy fear, and none be meddling or

exercising themselves in things too high for them.” (Williams, p.120) In *Let Your Words Be Few*, Richard Bauman contrasts the early period of Quakerism and Quietism with “a realization that Friends might have purchased their survival at the sacrifice of the energy and power of the direct inward spiritual experience that had energized the first publishers of Truth.” (p.51-2) As a prelude to this, Bauman cites the epistle of London YM of 1672 that cautions ministers to “take heed of aggravating reflections and forward clashing at persons or people, with unreasonably and rashly using names of distinctions; which will be resented as reproachful to them, and not only stumble and prepossess their minds with prejudice, but also hinder their convincement.” Bauman observes that “this is not war but diplomacy. One need only try to imagine James Parnal or Richard Farnsworth in the mid-1650s moderating his preaching out of a concern for provoking resentment or appearing reproachful to see how enormous a change is represented here.” (p.145-6) With the onset of Quietism, Friends abandoned the Lamb’s War and accepted their place as a sect free to pursue its peculiarities and internal needs. Many of the witnesses and ways that were essential to Friends continued among them, but Quietist Friends no longer expected the world to be converted to Christ’s way as early Friends had.

Ohio Yearly Meeting is the last remaining yearly meeting that retains significant attitudes and practices from its Quietist heritage. I believe that God has preserved this remnant for a purpose that is unfolding and will soon unfold, for us to be instruments for His work here on earth under dramatically different conditions. Is the era of toleration slipping away, to be replaced by new challenges that have not been encountered by Friends for more than three centuries? In the evolution of Quietism there has been a slow but steady accommodation to the world. However, important, basic components of Christian unprogrammed faith remain among us that again are becoming attractive to people all over the world. One of these components is our understanding that Jesus Christ is the Word of God to be experienced as present here with us and to be sought and found within ourselves. Another component is that the Scriptures were inspired by the Word and have been preserved by God for our use for doctrine, reproof, for correction and for instruction. A third component is our retained understanding of and mechanisms for recognizing and nurturing God’s gifts among us. In addition, we affirm that all of life is under the care of our Lord. Are we at the threshold of and even now being called to a new work in God’s Kingdom? The impact on us individually and as a people could be enormous and far-reaching.

LIBERAL IDEA OF “PROGRESS”

The liberal idea of “progress” by mankind has increasingly been a force in our world, including in Quakerism in general. This understanding has its roots in the Enlightenment of the 17th and 18th Centuries that emphasized the power of human thought to understand all truth. Anything that cannot be understood by the rational use of our minds is denied as invalid and not worth being encumbered with. This mindset continues with us and tends now to question everything, to disdain faith and to abhor authority of any sort. It has evolved into liberalism and modernism with their “politically correct” attitudes. It fosters a materialistic secularism that functions in many ways like a religion. It views scientific process as the means to come to knowledge about all reality. It has, to quote Wilmer Cooper, “a one-story or one-dimensional world-view, which means that basic distinctions between the holy and profane, the sacred and the secular - even between good and evil - are ignored, if not erased. Taken to its logical conclusion, this denies the presence of evil in the world, or sees it as simply the absence of the good.”(*A Living Faith*, p. 29)

Quaker liberalism's outlook was summarized by That Of God In Everyone, although in many places now a discomfort with the use of "God" has led to replacement of that word with "good." Again quoting Wilmer Cooper, "Insofar as 'that of God in everyone' has theological meaning today, its association with Christ has been largely abandoned, whereas for George Fox this identification was essential. It has also come to mean that God as they understand the deity, has been parceled out among all persons so that everyone has a 'piece of God' within, and that it is this that gives worth and dignity to human beings. This suggests a humanistic view of life devoid of a sense of God transcending creation, history, and humanity, which can easily revert to a form of pantheism antithetical to Fox's sense of the greatness and goodness of God and the supreme presence and transforming power of God at work in the world. Thus, the net effect is a denigration of God and an exaltation of humanity. Somehow, this belies Fox's overwhelming sense that 'the power of the Lord is over all.'" (*A Living Faith*, p. 30)

The tendency in the western world to elevate humans and the hoped for march to a freer and more decent world have led to a secular force that especially dominates in western Europe and increasingly also in the United States. It has been especially opposed in the US by Evangelical Christians and Roman Catholics, with resultant deep divisions that have polarized American society. This secular force, with its attendant globalization, expects to dominate the world, and is being challenged by an increasingly militant Islam. We see other dividing forces at work, such as an increasing polarization in this country between the rich and the poor. The media and the entertainment industry - which are allied to a mass, materialistic, consumer society - increasingly dominate our culture, even its religious aspects, and Christian services regrettably become a type of superficial entertainment. The physical environment is being plundered and irretrievably changed, with mass extinctions of many species and alteration of the physical environment on which we depend for ecological services. We expect to have a wide variety of food available to us, sometimes grown 6,000 miles away. Our federal government has taken on a debt of unimaginable size that depends for financing on people in other parts of the world, especially Asia. Should something panic the holders of the US debt, the meltdown of our economy and the society built upon it would be catastrophic.

The sustainability of all this is being increasingly questioned. What will happen when we reach the breaking point? How far off is this? Will we be prepared should an even more cataclysmic event occur than what has happened already? We saw how 9/11 was deeply upsetting for so many people.

PREPARING FOR A FUTURE THAT MAY QUICKLY BECOME THE PRESENT.

We read in 1 Thessalonians 5:1-6, *But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child, and they shall not escape. But ye brethren are not in darkness that that day should overtake you as a thief. Ye are all children of light and the children of the day; we are not of the night nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep, as do others but let us watch and be sober.* Individually and collectively, we Westerners have enjoyed many blessings over the years that have come to seem normal and expected: lights that turn on with the flick of a switch, safe water that pours from our faucets, dependable transportation, an

abundance of consumer goods, and personal safety as we walk, travel, work, and worship. I am sure that you can add many more.

Can we assume that these blessings will continue? Can they continue? Do we require these blessings to continue feel blessed? Could we feel blessed of the Lord under adversity or do we depend on the outwardly good times to feel blessed?

Since WWII, 60 years and 3 generations ago, Westerners have not experienced large-scale adversity. The great majority of people on earth today are not strangers to adversity. Over three billion people live on the equivalent of \$2 a day or less. If we should come to experience adversity like so many others, would we be prepared? What do we need to do to prepare ourselves should this come to pass? Jesus spoke about preparation in the parable of the wise and foolish virgins.¹⁶ We need to take our eyes off the things and allures of this world and look to God and His kingdom. On 9/11 did thee feel that thy world had altered greatly? Or did we feel our feet on the Rock and have that steady place to stand?

Early Friends lived under adversity. They were beaten, imprisoned, and even killed. They were hailed before judges and had their goods taken. They were social outcasts, yet they thrived and the Friends' movement grew and flourished. They saw themselves in the midst of the Lamb's War, an epic struggle between the Lamb Jesus Christ and Satan with his forces of evil.

In this struggle there is no place for lukewarmness. In the Lamb's War, Christians are called upon to follow Christ into battle as citizens of His kingdom, prepared and equipped by Him. Paul described that equipment: *Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.* (Ephesians 6:10-17)

The foundation of the Lamb's War seems foolish to the world, for following Christ into that battle requires following the way of the Cross. In the Cross, Jesus yielded Himself to His Father's will. In this submitted, yielded state Christ suffered. He allowed the forces of evil to destroy His life as the ultimate sacrifice of the Lamb of God, shedding His blood as a once-for-all-time offering for the sins of everyone. And in His resurrection, which we experience through His continuing presence among us, we come to know the ultimate victory of God. As His followers, we need to take up our crosses daily and follow Him. This requires our yieldedness and submission to God, that God's will might be manifest in all things. George Fox wrote in his epistle #9 of 1652, "That which is set up by the sword is held up by the sword. That which is set up by spiritual weapons is held up by spiritual weapons, and not by carnal weapons."

As we yield ourselves to Christ, accept suffering, and put into use the whole armor of God, we will find ourselves changed. The struggle in the world between good and evil that we call the Lamb's War is paralleled within each of us individuals. Both Jesus and Paul described the possible outcomes of that inner battle in terms of fruits:

Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them. Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. (Matthew 7:16-21)

Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. (Galatians 5:19-23)

By our fruits we, too, shall be known.

¹ And the LORD spake unto Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, saying, This month shall be unto you the beginning of months: it shall be the first month of the year to you. Speak ye unto all the congregation of Israel, saying, In the tenth day of this month they shall take to them every man a lamb, according to the house of their fathers, a lamb for an house: And if the household be too little for the lamb, let him and his neighbour next unto his house take it according to the number of the souls; every man according to his eating shall make your count for the lamb. Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year: ye shall take it out from the sheep, or from the goats: And ye shall keep it up until the fourteenth day of the same month: and the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it in the evening. And they shall take of the blood, and strike it on the two side posts and on the upper door post of the houses, wherein they shall eat it. And they shall eat the flesh in that night, roast with fire, and unleavened bread; and with bitter herbs they shall eat it. Eat not of it raw, nor sodden at all with water, but roast with fire; his head with his legs, and with the purtenance thereof. And ye shall let nothing of it remain until the morning; and that which remaineth of it until the morning ye shall burn with fire. And thus shall ye eat it; with your loins girded, your shoes on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and ye shall eat it in haste: it is the LORD'S passover. For I will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I am the LORD. And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye are: and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt.

² And he said, Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou any thing unto him: for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me. And Abraham lifted up his eyes, and looked, and behold behind him a ram caught in a thicket by his horns: and Abraham went and took the ram, and offered him up for a burnt offering in the stead of his son. And Abraham called the name of that place Jehovahjireh: as it is said to this day, In the mount of the LORD it shall be seen. And the angel of the LORD called unto Abraham out of heaven the second time, And said, By myself have I sworn, saith the LORD, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son: That in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice. (Genesis 22:12-18 KJV)

³ And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; And said to the

mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand? (Revelation 6:15-17)

⁴ And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night. And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death. (Revelation 12:10-1)

⁵ And they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast: and they worshipped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him? And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months. And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven. And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations. And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. (Revelation 13:4-8)

⁶ After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; And cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb. And all the angels stood round about the throne, and about the elders and the four beasts, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God, Saying, Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen. And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they? And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes. (Revelation 7:9-17)

⁷ And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints. Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy: for all nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy judgments are made manifest. (Revelation 15:3-4)

⁸ And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints. And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God. (Revelation 19:6-9)

⁹ And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it. And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof. (Revelation 21:22-23)

¹⁰ And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him: And they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads. And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever. (Revelation 22:1-5)

¹¹ And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH. (Revelation 17:5)

¹² And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him. (Revelation 12:9)

¹³ For example: Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another. (Galatians 5:19-26)

¹⁴ And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself. And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God. And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. (Revelation 19:11-15)

¹⁵ Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints; (Ephesians 6:10-18)

¹⁶ Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. And five of them were wise, and five were foolish. They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them: But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept. And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him. Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out. But the wise answered, saying, Not so; lest there be not enough for us and you: but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves. And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut. Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not. Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh. (Matthew 25:1-13)