

How to Storm the Gates of Hell

Hold the Fort or Storm the Gates?

Think about it: When you face opposition from the devil and his demonic hordes, do you demonstrate Satan's defeat? What do you demonstrate? Is it fight or flight? Which of these hymns rises first to your lips, "Hold the Fort" or "Onward, Christian Soldiers"?

Now, in a military battle there is great honor in holding the fort to the last man. Such an act speaks of the highest courage. In fact, Philip P. Bliss composed "Hold the Fort" in 1870 after hearing someone relate such an incident from the Civil War. But this is a spiritual battle we are talking about, and I would rather not find myself or my church in the position the hymn's next lines portray: "See the mighty host advancing, Satan leading on. Mighty ones around us falling, courage almost gone!"

It sounds as if we are cowering behind crumbling church walls, hoping against hope that Jesus will return and rescue us before the devil takes us all out. I much prefer the strategic position of the church in "Onward, Christian Soldiers": "Onward, Christian soldiers! Marching as to war, with the cross of Jesus going on before. Christ, the royal Master, leads against the foe; forward into battle, see His banners go."

It is a question of who is leading the advance, who is following and who is giving way in retreat. In the first hymn, Satan leads his "mighty" host while the church is barely hanging on, losing courage in the face of the enemy's ferocious attack. In the second hymn, Christ the royal Master leads the Church's soldiers into battle, and our foe is the

one who must give way. The hymn continues: "At the sign of triumph Satan's host doth flee; on then, Christian soldiers, on to victory! Hell's foundations quiver at the shout of praise; brothers, lift your voices, loud your anthems raise. ... Gates of hell can never 'gainst that Church prevail; we have Christ's own promise, and that cannot fail."

The scenario in the second hymn aligns with the Word of God. Jesus promised, "I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it" (Matt. 16:18). As a soldier in this spiritual battle, you are not supposed to cower and yell, "O God, the devil is after me!" Instead, your battle cry should be "O God, I'm after the devil!" Your purpose here on earth is not to barely survive until Jesus comes back to rescue you. He has equipped His church—you and me—to advance and storm the enemy's gates, plunder hell and populate heaven!

If that is not how you react in the heat of battle, the pages that follow will help you. You will see how to enlist in the advancing army of God and how to make the devil give way. You will learn to accurately size up the enemy and master weapons that have power to demonstrate Satan's defeat. "For although we do live in the world, we do not wage war in a worldly way; because the weapons we use to wage war are not worldly. On the contrary, they have God's power for demolishing strongholds" (2 Cor. 10:3-4, CJB).

The Advantage Is All Ours

Our duty as the army of God is to demonstrate Satan's defeat. In any army, accurate intelligence reports are vital for soldiers to effectively carry out their duty. In that regard, we have the distinct advantage. The source of our intelligence is the Word of God, which tells us everything we need to know to "fight the good fight of faith" (1 Tim. 6:12). With God's Word as our source, "Satan will not outsmart us," for we will be very "familiar with his evil schemes" (2 Cor.

2:11, NLT).

We know that our adversary, the devil, “walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour” (1 Pet. 5:8). But we also know that we can put him to flight: “Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you” (James 4:7).

In the Bible God personally speaks to each of us, and when it says the enemy will flee from you, it is not talking about him fleeing from some super-Christian. It’s talking about you. You personally. You do not need to travel hundreds of miles to enlist the help of Billy Graham or Reinhard Bonnke. You do not even need to get your senior pastor out of bed. *You* have authority over the enemy in the name of Jesus.

The last time the enemy fled from you was the last time you resisted him. If that was a long time ago—or maybe never—here is the best part: The next time the enemy flees from you will be the next time you resist him. That can begin right now. You can begin to use the authority God has given you, the authority in Jesus’ name, to demonstrate Satan’s defeat in your life.

It is the devil’s turn to be terrorized when Christians discover the authority they have in Jesus’ name. The devil knows that once you learn to use that authority, your reaction to him changes from flight to fight—and his advance is routed. This book will help you learn to use your God-given authority over the enemy to experience that kind of victory. You will realize that the terror the devil inspires quickly fades in the light of the one whom you follow. God the Father gave His Son “the name above all other names, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father” (Phil. 2:9-11, NLT). There is unfathomable power in that name!

You may be among those Christians who are absolutely petrified of the devil, hunkering down to barely hold the fort against him and his hordes. Or you may be among those Christians who know the war is already won but are still intimidated by the devil's tactics and unsure of how to deal with him. In either case, you need to know that the advantage is all on our side. You need an accurate, biblical perspective of the devil. Even more important, you need to know how to use the mighty weapons God has given us to demonstrate the devil's defeat.

Educating Ourselves About the Enemy

In the chapters ahead, we will educate ourselves about the enemy and discover who he is and who he is not. We will also discover a whole list of things the devil *cannot* do, and we will expose the tactics he employs against people who are unaware of his limits or ignorant of Scripture. Never was the verse "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge" (Hos. 4:6) more accurate than in this area. People who lack knowledge of a biblical perspective on the devil allow him far more leeway in their lives than he has any right to take. When it comes to the devil, "Give him an inch, and he'll take a mile" is a gross understatement! But we need not allow him even one inch.

We will also examine a dozen signs of demonic activity and learn how to discern when "demon trouble" is afoot. Victory is at hand when we learn how to wield the mighty spiritual authority God has placed at our disposal, and when we study the weapons of our warfare and learn how to become dangerous to the devil. We want to take every action possible to block the advance of his kingdom of darkness. Many of his tactics are only successful when people open the doors for him to unleash them.

Disarming the devil's attacks is frequently a matter of identifying the areas in people's lives in which they have

ignorantly or inadvertently let him in. We will talk about how to pinpoint those areas and how to then *uninvite* the devil, ushering him out and firmly shutting the doors so he cannot come back. Jesus the deliverer provided us with impenetrable spiritual weapons with which we can disarm the devil. Satan cannot get under, over or around them—he *must* give way to the mighty name of Jesus. Tactics such as knowing the truth, knowing in whose kingdom we belong, resisting our enemy, putting on the righteousness of Christ and aligning our words with God's Word will make the enemy fall back in defeat.

Jesus completely defeated Satan and delivered us from every dark pit the devil would use to trap us. Along the way, our deliverer demonstrated how we too can disarm the devil and live in God's light. That is a joy-filled victory worth shouting about:

May you be filled with joy, always thanking the Father. He has enabled you to share in the inheritance that belongs to His people, who live in the light. For He has rescued us from the kingdom of darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of his dear Son, who purchased our freedom and forgave our sins (Col. 1:11-14, NLT).

God has already rescued us and has enabled us to share an inheritance in the kingdom of His Son. When we focus on Jesus as our deliverer, understanding the blessings and tactical advantages He has already won for us, we can go on the offensive—we can demonstrate Satan's defeat.

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