

# The Art of Spiritual Warfare Part 4 of 10: Weapons and Armor of God; Shield of Faith; Job's Example (Presented in 2016)

The following text is based on a message from Corner Fringe Ministries that was presented by Daniel Joseph. The original presentation can be viewed at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BtDTVkD34gY>

**\*Portions of the video message have been edited to present a written document. All the Scripture verses are from the New King James Version unless otherwise noted and are in the red text. Therefore, it is recommended that this document is printed in color. The Hebrew is to be read from right to left.**

Well, we are in part 4 of The Art of Spiritual Warfare. Over these last couple weeks, we've been confronted with the reality: we are inundated with war. War is in front, behind, above and below us. As we get further into this study, we are going to discover that war is even inside our hearts and minds. We find that war is very much the reality.

Today I want to open up with a statement from the Apostle Paul expressing this reality. If you study the Apostle Paul by reading his writings, one thing you discover very quickly is Paul address the topic of war. He does it in an extremely intense and informative manner to impart to us the power of God.

Let's go to II Corinthians 10:3—**For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh.** The first thing to note here is Paul lets us know we, in the plural, we, are at war. Believers in Yeshua are at war.

Paul goes on to reveal something about this war and what this war looks like. This is not a physical war. This is not a war being fought with tanks, bombs, guns, and laser-guided missiles such as the Iron Dome. We can take this back into Paul's context of the 1<sup>st</sup> century. This is not being fought with shields, swords, and bows. The context of this war is spiritual.

Paul then states in II Corinthians 10:4—**For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal.** In other words, they're not flesh; they are not of this earth. Continuing—**but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds.** When Paul says the weapons—**mighty in God for pulling down strongholds**—he has my attention. They are mighty in God for what? **Pulling down strongholds.**

I want to take you to the Greek because I want to dig into this to help you appreciate what the Corinthians understood when Paul used this imagery. The Greek for the word stronghold is οχύρωμα - a fortified military stronghold; a strong-walled fortress. This is what Paul is referring to, a strong wall fortress. So Paul is likening the attacks of HaSatan (Satan) to fortified military forces. These are fortresses, mind you, that have been erected against you for one reason, to bring you to desolation.

Let's go back to Paul's day and help you appreciate this and put it in context. When Rome destroyed Jerusalem, they also looted the temple and burned it to the ground. Keep in mind they did not do this in 1 day. Vespasian started the work, and then Titus came in and finished the Job. There was planning involved in doing this. Rome set up strongholds all around the city. What happened? Jerusalem fell.

The enemy had encamped around Jerusalem and had put all these strongholds around the city. It was through these strongholds that Jerusalem fell.

A couple of years after the fall of Jerusalem, there was another war known as the Masada War. All the Jewish Zealots fled to Masada because they had had enough of Rome. Masada was the place to be to defend one's self because of its height and sheer walls. It was a remarkable military fortress; it was the primary military position you want to be in.

Guess what happened? Just a couple of years later after the Romans got done with Jerusalem, the Romans went to Masada. How did they take something that looks completely impossible? They took it by building strongholds around Masada. They built this huge ramp up to the top, and Masada fell because of the strongholds.

This is precisely what Paul is trying to convey to us. He is trying to convey the reality or the power of these strongholds and the power of the weapons of God. You want to put these weapons of the LORD in context and understand how great they are.

Think about the strongholds in your life that the enemy puts up against you such as fear, doubt, sexual immorality, idolatry, covetousness, and pride being just a few of the various lusts of the world. You had better recognize that Satan is erecting strongholds around you for a reason. He is coming for you to bring you to desolation. This is the context that you need to understand. When Paul starts talking about the weapons of the Living God, your ears need to perk up because your life depends on it.

The next question is where do we keep these weapons because I want to be able to defend myself. Do I want to be able to take the strongholds down that the enemy uses to come against me with desolation? Where do I get them, and what are they?

Fortunately for us, Paul tells us what they are. Going to Ephesians 6:10-11—<sup>10</sup> **Finally, my brethren, be strong in the LORD and in the power of His might.** I love how he kicks this off. He is commanding us to be strong in the LORD and in the power of His might. How many of you want to move in the power of His might? For us believers in Yeshua, that should send chills down your spine. It is everything for us to be able to move. We as believers fantasize about moving in our life in the power of God.

So how do we move in this power? Paul tells us in verse 11—**Put on the whole armor of God....** That's how we move in the power of His might. We are to put on the entire armor. We are not to put on the armor partial. We are to put on all of it. For what purpose—**that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.** That word wiles in the Greek is *μεθοδεία* *methodeia*. That is where we get the term method. It means that we may be able to stand against his method, modus, and military strategy against us. This is how we will stand. When you build strongholds around a city, what happens? The city falls. Paul is telling us through these weapons we will be made to stand.

Going to Ephesians 6:12—**For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood.** What did Paul say in 2 Corinthians 10? He said the same thing; the war is spiritual. Continuing—**but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.**

This war is as intense and as intimate as it could get. This is hand to hand combat. When the enemy is engaging you, he is coming to you personally. You might say, "Well Daniel, I don't want to participate in this war. I'd like to sit this one out. I am not a soldier." I'm going to tell you something; you do not have a choice. So in the interest of self-preservation, you might want to get armed and get ready for war because you will go toe to toe with the enemy. If you don't think you're at war, I'm terrified for you. You need to start looking into your heart, mind, and life for strongholds that are being erected that you don't see. Satan is constructing these things to bring you to desolation.

Ephesians 6:13—**Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.** If you want to prevail, you're going to need to be armed to the teeth. Our adversary could not be a scarier scenario. You need to be armed to the teeth. If you're not armed, you are exposed and will fall. This is as serious as it gets.

There's a reason the Apostle Paul is imparting this information, and he continues to go on to tell us what these weapons are. This is where we want to zero in and pay close attention. Ephesians 6:14-17—<sup>14</sup>**Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, <sup>15</sup>and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; <sup>16</sup>above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. <sup>17</sup>And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.**

When you look at this list of weapons, this armor, that Paul has compiled here, you notice it's literally from head to toe in the sense of coverage. Every aspect of the person who would bear this stuff is equipped head to toe; he is ready to go to war and battle against the spiritual host of witness and demonic forces coming in his life. He is ready to do battle against the lust of the flesh.

I do want to draw your attention to something specific in that list. There's one particular item here that's given preeminence over all the others. There is one item Paul elevates to stand out. We find that in Ephesians 6:16. Paul starts by saying—**above all.** Does this grab your attention? We are to go through the list but focus on this— **above all.** We are to—**take the shield of faith.** Look at what he says—**with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one.**



Put that into context. Everything that HaSatan can throw at you from his arsenal can be dispelled through the shield of faith in Yeshua. Think about how powerful a weapon the shield of faith is.

When you study the history of war, and you go back to the days of Paul, one of the things that you realize is the use of archers and the bow and arrow in war. Archery and the use of it was a very effective tool in warfare that allowed you to fight from a distance. When your arrow hit the mark, it was a kill shot.

I want you to think about something; even the kings of Israel fell in this manner. King Saul was wounded with a shot that turned fatal. King Josiah died because the archer hit his mark. The use of archery is a very effective tool in war. Century after century, people would light these arrows on fire and just wreak havoc on the camps by burning the tents down. What was even scarier was they would send this

barrage of arrows at night. You wouldn't see anything; they would just start hitting. All you would hear is the whistles they would make, and they start coming into camp at 100 miles per hour. This is a very useful tool of war.

My question to you is this, how do you defend yourself against such a tool? The answer to Satan's arrows is the shield of faith. Let me further help you appreciate the imagery that Paul is utilizing here and the importance of faith in battle. If you go back to around the 5th century B.C., there was a group of men who existed in that day which is considered, even by today's standards of military force, to be the most elite force that ever walked on planet earth. Who are these men? They are known as the Spartans. They're also known by the germane reference as Hoplites. That'll be significant as we continue.

To help you appreciate the Spartans, you need to understand Spartan society because their culture, their government, and every aspect of them were to have one primary function which was to construct the most deadly warriors in the world. This was not a typical Greek government where you think Athens and democracy. Sparta set itself apart from your typical Greece democracy or government. Sparta was more of a socialistic oligarchy type of thing because at seven years of age a male child was taken away from the mother, and that male child immediately went into training for war.

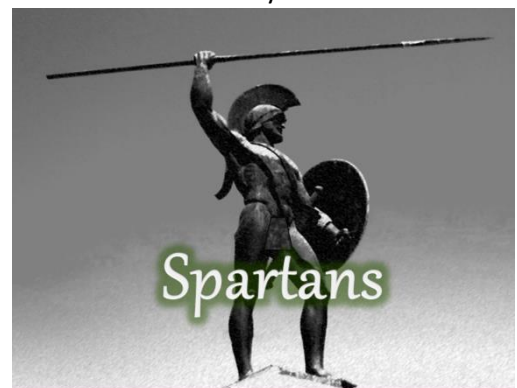
There are all these interesting adages that are said about the Spartans. I will give an example. A person came up to a Spartan and said, "You have no walls around Sparta. How come Sparta has no walls? You are completely defenseless." The Spartan's response was, "Make no mistake. We are protected by the tips of the spears of our warriors. Those are walls."

So these men were revered. To give you an idea, 45,000 Spartan's took on 200,000 men. This was an elite fighting force. They were trained in hand to hand combat better than anyone. In fact, they were experts in what we would now call mixed martial arts. It is kind of funny that the Olympic Games of the time would have this mixed martial arts competition. The only rule was that no Spartan could compete in this mixed martial arts competition because they were trained killers. The Olympic Games organizers knew if they allowed a Spartan into the competition, they were going to kill their opponent. The opponent didn't have a chance at winning. This gives you an idea of how well trained and formidable these individuals were. You didn't just roll into Spartan and start up a war. That would have been your death.

I want to talk about this because it all pertains to what Paul just shared with us. When you look at the attire the Spartans were known for, they were known for their helmets. These helmets were very intimidating and very scary looking. When you saw 30-45,000 of these helmets coming at you, it was intimidating.

Look at their spear. This was a very long spear. But the thing that they were most known for was, in fact, their shield. Their shield was the most prominent piece of armor they bore.

When Spartans would go to war, they would be told, "Men of Sparta. Bring back this shield. You will either be carrying it or may your brothers carry you on it [indicating that you died in battle]." The shield in their society and their culture was revered.



I want you to understand something; their shield wasn't something that they utilize to defend themselves. Their shield operated on a whole other level. When they would gather together for war, they had something known as a phalanx. This is where the Spartans would stay shoulder to shoulder with each other, and their shields would come together with their spears going over the top of the shield. What was interesting about their very large shields is by interlocking their shields together that would create this army that would look like an armor tank type of thing. You would then have all these men moving along in perfect unison with their shields interlocked.

Here is why it was so revered. The shield wasn't just about the person carrying it. It was also about protecting the guy next to them. It played a role in defending your brother who stood next to you. Your brother who stood next to you, his shield protected the guy next to him and so on and so forth. So this shield was more revered than anything.

That is exactly what Paul is telling us—**Above all, take the shield the faith.** So we find in the Spartans the shield was the most revered thing because it protected their brothers; it was not just about the Spartan himself. Here is where I am going with this; this is exactly how it's supposed to operate in the Church. Our shield of faith has such great power that we can defend our brother. If someone were to fall in battle, his comrades would come together and immediately build a wall of interlocked shields to protect their comrade who fell. This is precisely the same way it happens regarding the power of the shield of faith.

Let me give you a biblical example of this. In Mark 2:1-3—**<sup>1</sup> And again He entered Capernaum after some days, and it was heard that He was in the house. <sup>2</sup> Immediately many gathered together so that there was no longer room to receive them, not even near the door. And He preached the word to them. <sup>3</sup> Then they came to Him, bringing a paralytic who was carried by four men.** I want you to look at this because this is all about warfare. They had a fallen comrade who could not present himself to Yeshua. He couldn't physically do it. What happens? These soldiers, men of faith, took up their shields of faith and interlock them, and they made their way to see Yeshua. They knew that if they can get their fallen comrade before Yeshua, there will be a victory.

Moving on to Mark 2:4-5—**<sup>4</sup> And when they could not come near Him because of the crowd, they uncovered the roof where He was. So when they had broken through.** I love this terminology—**they broke through.** Let me tell you something; when you get together and interlock your shields of faith as men and women of God, you will break through battlefield lines that cannot be broken. It's powerful!

So here these men with their faith big breakthrough—**they let down the bed on which the paralytic was lying. <sup>5</sup> When Jesus saw their faith, He said to the paralytic, "Son, your sins are forgiven you."** This is the awesome power of faith. These men acted in faith. They came together as a perfect unit, they lifted this man up, and they brought him to Yeshua. That is faith! Faith is going to lead the charge in war, and it is faith in Yeshua that will gain you the victory.

It's interesting that when you look at the way the Spartans utilized their shield, it wasn't just a defense mechanism. It was a scary bashing event. These shields were coated in bronze. When you went up against the Spartans, who were extremely strong and fit, the shield wouldn't just serve as protection. It would help to break through and bash their opponents. The shield would drop the opponents.

That is the power of the shield the faith. It is to drop our enemy and break through the lines. We can do this, but it's through faith in Yeshua.

Let's go to James 5:14—**Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church.** These are supposed to be the men that are equipped for war. From head to toe, they're ready to go. They understand the value of faith in Yeshua. They know how to use the shield.

Continuing—**and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the LORD. <sup>15</sup> And the prayer of faith will save the sick, and the LORD will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven.** You need to understand something. This is exactly what we just read in Mark 2. Other men are coming on behalf of their fallen comrade, and they bind their shields of faith together. They bring him into the presence of Yeshua. Think of that in the sense of war. That is the most powerful concept. It is no wonder Paul says—**Above all take the shield of faith (Ephesians 6:15).**

Let me tell you something. As a believer in Yeshua, when there is a war I am not going to surround myself with a bunch of ninnyes or a bunch of namby-pamby guys who are not armed to the teeth or have a genuine relationship with the LORD. No Spartan would ever go to war with a guy who doesn't know how to fight. They stand alongside their brothers who they know are trained for war and ready to go because they know that when they interlock their shields, the guy beside him is defending him. I want that defense. There's a statement in Special Forces today, we live as a team, and we die as a team.

This is the mentality you need to start letting sink into your heart when it comes to war. The body of believers is powerful. We are to move like one. Amen?

I want to take you to the book of Job. When you think about spiritual warfare, I don't know how anyone could go through spiritual warfare without talking about the story of Job. So we're going to do that today.

We're going to begin in Job 1:1—**There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job; and that man was blameless and upright, and one who feared God and shunned evil.** Right off the bat, we recognize that Job is well trained. He is a skilled, armed to the teeth warrior of the LORD. He is ready to go. We know this based upon Job's character. He fears God and flees evil. He loved and surrounded himself with righteousness. Every morning Job would get up, and he would sacrifice to the LORD. He made intercession on behalf of his children just in case they sinned. That is a man who wakes up in the morning and puts on a shield of faith. He is moving in faith before God. He is a warrior. He is a spiritual powerhouse.

However, as we come to Job 1:6-8, we are going to discover that Job's life takes a dramatic change. Job is about to enter into some serious warfare where the enemy comes toe to toe with him. Now we read—**<sup>6</sup> Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came among them. <sup>7</sup> And the LORD said to Satan, "From where do you come?" So Satan answered the LORD and said, "From going to and fro on the earth, and from walking back and forth on it." <sup>8</sup> Then the LORD said to Satan, "Have you considered My servant Job? You can imagine if Job was seeing this interaction he would be saying, "LORD, what are you doing?"**

Continuing in Job 1:8—**that there is none like him on the earth.** Rarely do we hear such words of prestige

applied to a man. Continuing in Job 1:8—**a blameless and upright man, one who fears God and shuns evil?"**

One thing that you are going to need in war is encouragement. You need to let this passage sink down into your heart. What struck me is could you imagine the joy that it could bring you if the LORD spoke to you like He spoke about Job? Imagine being able to have the ability to impress God who created heaven and earth. Understand something, that's nearly an impossible task. After reading through Scripture after Scripture, the one way I know that God is impressed is the shield of faith. If you move in faith and walk in righteousness, it brings Him joy, and you please the LORD. That is such a powerful concept and makes me want to walk with Him and please Him. I want to be able to do something no one could possibly imagine, and that is to impress the LORD.

Just think about that whole concept as we go on to Job 1:9-10—**<sup>9</sup> So Satan answered the LORD and said, "Does Job fear God for nothing? <sup>10</sup> Have You not made a hedge around him, around his household, and around all that he has on every side? You have blessed the work of his hands, and his possessions have increased in the land.** When you please the LORD, what does He do? He protects and guards you. He walks with you. He blesses you. This is what our relationship with Yeshua is supposed to look like. We're to emulate this.

Moving on to Job 1:11—**<sup>11</sup> But now, stretch out Your hand and touch all that he has, and he will surely curse You to Your face!"** It is so important that you pay close attention to what Satan just said to the LORD. Remember, when we read the Bible this is a war manual. It is a training manual. The principles, information, and secret intelligence that is in this book is for real life. We are to take these concepts and apply them. This is a book of war because we are at war. What did Satan say to the LORD? Satan challenged the LORD— **stretch out Your hand...he will surely curse You.**

I want you to think about that statement. What does Satan want? We need to study our enemy if we're at war. What do we know about our enemy? How does he move? What is the modus operandi? Satan wants us to curse God. That is his goal. What is his strategy? How does he want to achieve that goal?

As we continue we're going to find out in Job 1:12-15—**<sup>12</sup> And the LORD said to Satan, "Behold, all that he has is in your power; only do not lay a hand on his person." So Satan went out from the presence of the LORD. <sup>13</sup> Now there was a day when his sons and daughters were eating and drinking wine in their oldest brother's house; <sup>14</sup> and a messenger came to Job and said, "The oxen were plowing and the donkeys feeding beside them, <sup>15</sup> when the Sabeans raided them and took them away. Indeed they have killed the servants with the edge of the sword; and I alone have escaped to tell you!"**

This is war. Satan moved in the spiritual realm, and it is being manifested in the physical. Job is physically experiencing things, but they come directly from the spiritual realm. Satan sent the Sabeans after Job's possessions to hurt Job.

Let's move on to Job 1:16—**<sup>16</sup> While he was still speaking, another also came and said, "The fire of God fell from heaven and burned up the sheep and the servants, and consumed them; and I alone have escaped to tell you!"** Look at the power of the adversary. The first time he moves in the physical realm he utilizes men. The second time he moves in a spiritual manner. He rained supernatural fire, what we would call an act of God, down from heaven. When you start to look at his arsenal, and how he comes against, this is very powerful.

Now we go to Job 1:17-19—<sup>17</sup> While he was still speaking, another also came and said, "The Chaldeans formed three bands, raided the camels and took them away, yes, and killed the servants with the edge of the sword; and I alone have escaped to tell you!" <sup>18</sup> While he was still speaking, another also came and said, "Your sons and daughters were eating and drinking wine in their oldest brother's house, <sup>19</sup> and suddenly a great wind came from across the wilderness and struck the four corners of the house, and it fell on the young people, and they are dead; and I alone have escaped to tell you!"

This is all out war. Satan came against Job by wreaked havoc on everything he possessed. Nothing was spared in Job's house. Everything went into Satan's power. What did he do? He does what we know him to do. He brings you to desolation. He brought all Job's possessions to desolation. We need to understand and appreciate that we have an enemy who is going to attempt to overwhelm us through trials and tribulations. It brings him joy to inflict pain and sorrow upon us.

How does Job respond? Job 1:20-22—<sup>20</sup> Then Job arose, tore his robe, and shaved his head; and he fell to the ground and worshiped. <sup>21</sup> And he said: "Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked shall I return there. The LORD gave, and the LORD has taken away; Blessed be the name of the LORD." <sup>22</sup> In all this Job did not sin nor charge God with wrong.

This is an absolutely amazing example of faith. Job is in an all-out war. Despite the pain and tribulation Satan afflicted Job with, Job doesn't move. He holds the line. He holds fast his shield of faith. He was immovable.

Job doesn't blame God. He doesn't curse God. That is what Satan wanted him to do. In fact, Job does something unexpected that Satan could never imagine. After Satan took everything from him, Job falls to his knees and worship the One True God and blesses His name. Job does not sin with his mouth. Satan failed because of Job's faith. His faith did not waver.

Now getting deeper into the modus operandi of our adversary. Did Satan just give up and go home? No. He didn't give up. What we find is he comes back and presents himself before the LORD again. The LORD says, "Have you considered my servant Job?" We then find Satan's response in Job 2:4-5—<sup>4</sup> So Satan answered the LORD and said, "Skin for skin! Yes, all that a man has he will give for his life. <sup>5</sup> But stretch out Your hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will surely curse You to Your face!" It is very important for you to know that despite failing to overcome Job, Satan continues his mission to destroy Job. He finds a different angle.

Satan is going to do this to every single one of you. You may hold the line on one particular item, but he's looking for a vulnerable spot. He will come back and attack again. He is going to do everything he can to achieve the goal to get you to blame and curse God. This is the goal. He wants us to abandon our Creator. And by abandoning the LORD, what you are doing is giving Satan worship.

Going on to Job 2:6-8—<sup>6</sup> And the LORD said to Satan, "Behold, he is in your hand, but spare his life." <sup>7</sup> So Satan went out from the presence of the LORD, and struck Job with painful boils from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head. <sup>8</sup> And he took for himself a potsherd with which to scrape himself while he sat in the midst of the ashes. Satan takes everything from Job, but now he comes after Job's health.



I have to tell you when you come after somebody's health it can be both physically and emotionally debilitating and crippling. It will challenge your faith when Satan attacks your health. Are you going to blame God or wallow in self-pity? That is certainly a lot easier for us to do in the flesh.

What does Job do? Job 2:9—<sup>9</sup> **Then his wife said to him, "Do you still hold fast to your integrity? Curse God and die!"**

Put this all into context regarding the craftiness of our adversary. First, he came out and took all Job's possessions. Job was rich beyond measure, and Satan took away everything. When that didn't work, Satan attacks Job's health. What's interesting is Satan has something up a sleeve. It is an ace in the hole, if you will, to achieve the goal of getting Job to curse God. Satan takes someone that is the closest to Job on the planet earth. This is the one Job is one flesh with. Satan sends Job's wife to go to him in order to encourage Job to release the integrity and commitment to the LORD and instead curse God. This is the move of the adversary. He is crafty and very cunning.

What was Job's answer to her? Job 2:10—<sup>10</sup> **But he said to her, "You speak as one of the foolish women speaks. Shall we indeed accept good from God, and shall we not accept adversity?" In all this Job did not sin with his lips.** Job took the shield of faith, and he dispelled, just as Paul said it would, every single attack and angle that the adversary came at him with. He dispelled it through the shield of faith. His faith was mighty and powerful. If you want to survive this war, you're going to have to do as Paul says—**above all, taking the shield of faith (Ephesians 6:16).** Paul says this because Satan is going to bring trials and tribulations. We are going to go through them, and you'd better be prepared for them.

Think about your lives right now. How many of you can honestly say that you are going through trials and tribulations right now? How many of you feel like you are in the Valley of the Shadow of Death? Maybe everything that you're doing at work is all of the sudden falling apart. Maybe you're financially attacked, and you're financially suffering right now. Maybe your health is under attack. Maybe you have relationships under attack in your life. Maybe you feel in general like your life is crumbling right before you.

How are you dealing with it? Are you armed with the weapons of the Living God to move in the power of His might? Are you holding the shield of faith because the shield of faith is going to begin this war, and it's going to end the war?

I love what it says in Psalm 119:67—**Before I was afflicted I went astray, But now I keep Your word.** Dropping down to verse 72—**It is good for me that I have been afflicted, that I may learn Your statutes.**

Think about that. When you are facing trials and tribulations, go to this passage and realize you are being refined. Your hands are being trained to know war. We are being trained to know war, and it is good when we are afflicted.

When something really traumatic happens in your life, how many of you respond by presenting yourself to Yeshua? It should be. When all the things in your life disappear, all that should matter is you crying out to the LORD, "LORD God help me." It is good when you are afflicted because it brings you to the feet of Yeshua. Accept it.

Ecclesiastes 7:3—**Sorrow is better than laughter, for by a sad countenance the heart is made better.** I can't tell you how many times I've seen people go through trials and tribulations, horrible things, and

they come out better. Their heart is refined from all the secret impurities. The LORD knows how to purge them out. It puts you back on the narrow path. We are not to despise the chastening of the LORD. We are not to despise the testing, trials, and the tribulations. We are to stand in faith; we are to fight. This is what we are to do. Paul says we are to glory in tribulations—<sup>3</sup>And not only *that*, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; <sup>4</sup>and perseverance, character; and character, hope (Romans 5:3-4).

To the world that sounds idiotic, but Paul knows something in that tribulation produces perseverance. Perseverance is endurance; it is faith. He who endures to the end will be saved. That is the message of faith. Your faith will take you to the end if you bear that shield of faith.

Faith produces perseverance, and perseverance produces character. Isn't that interesting? It is good that I've been afflicted that I may learn your statutes because now I'm truly going to walk in righteousness. I have been humbled. I am vulnerable before the LORD, and when I am weak, then I am strong. Right?

I love how Paul's verse goes on. It builds character, and then character does what? It results in hope. Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen (Hebrews 11:10). You go through this process of trials and tribulation. That, in turn, will produce endurance, and endurance produces good character. Good character will bring about hope.

What does all that mean? You begin with faith, and you end with faith because true hope is faith. It is realized in your heart. We do not stumble.

I'm going to close with this statement from Charles Spurgeon—[The Lord gets his best soldiers out of the highlands of affliction.](#)

That is so true. God gets his best soldiers out of the highlands of affliction. That is a fundamental Biblical concept. When I read about Joseph, Moses, David, Job, and the Apostle Paul, they all suffered great afflictions. Out of that, God got His best soldiers. Think about that statement!