

One reason I think that the warfare analogy was so useful is that the Roman empire in the time of Christ and Paul was literally filled with soldiers. One could not help but see them everywhere. In addition to this, there was a tradition in the Old Testament of struggling and fighting. The nation of Israel was supposed to wipe out the inhabitants of the promised land.

But the picture is perfect for the condition that we are in. We are in a literal war between good and evil, and the first thing that we must do is choose sides. We must be on one side or the other, and those who think that they can stand in the middle are only postponing disaster. The great writer Dante Alighieri once said that the hottest places in Hell are reserved for those who in time of great moral crises maintain their neutrality. And we are in a great moral crises right now. As Joshua put it, 'choose this day whom you will serve' (Joshua 24:25). We cannot be just a 'sunshine patriot and a summer soldier'. And we must remember that it is not God that chooses to be on our side, but God is only on the side of truth. We read in Joshua 5:14, after Joshua asks the angel 'are you for us or for our adversaries', the angel tells us that the answer is no: he is only on God's side.

If we choose to serve God, and fight on his side, there are several comforting thoughts which he has given us. He tells us in Exodus 14:13-14, 'Fear not, stand fir, and see the salvation of the Lord... The Lord will fight for you, and you have only to be still'. This I believe he said for those instances in which there is nothing else that can be done by us. When we have done all that we can, God will take up the slack. Then in Zephaniah 3:17, we read, 'The Lord your God is in your midst, a victorious warrior' (NAS). And in 2 Chronicles 14:11, 'Lord, there is no one besides thee to help in the battle between the powerful, and those h\who have no strength' (NAS). These are just a few of the many scriptures that could draw on to see God's help and power. We must realize that, from the fact of the incarnation, Christ was not a commander who gives orders from afar. He came right down to the battle front to lead the way for us.