



fought against the Allied forces and yet you were given a chance to switch sides after the war was over. Certainly, the wise souls who recognized that they were at the mercy of their conqueror would jump at such a chance. In a real way that is exactly the chance we are given in Christ. Satan will not

prevail! He has lost. Those who follow him are on the wrong side in an eternal battle whose outcome has been determined. Choosing to follow him is like jumping onto a sinking ship. The only hope rests in Christ. If we will recognize our own enmity against God, which was caused by our sin, and choose to *switch sides* we can be on the victorious side. The war is over, which side are you on?

has lost. All that remains is accounting for casualties. Our spiritual struggles should be thought of as minor skirmishes that (while vitally important to our spiritual lives) will not affect the final outcome. What remains to be determined is who is on what side.

Imagine that you were a Nazi or Japanese soldier who had



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BULLETIN OF
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CHRIST

The War Is Over

By Kyle Pope

For quite some time it had been looming on the horizon. Even though Americans of the 1930s and 1940s didn't want to be involved in a war in Europe and Asia, it was inevitable. Their hesitancy was understandable. Having just come out of the Depression and only a few years before that "The War to End All Wars"—World War I (which was followed by the Spanish Flu pandemic), no American was eager to involve our country in another conflict. Yet, on December 7, 1941 when Japan bombed Pearl Harbor it suddenly became evident that the oceans that separated us from the war were not enough to keep the "Axis Powers" (as the German and Japanese alliance was called) from threatening our own freedom. On that day American involvement in World War II began.

I suppose it is simply human nature to display such hesitancy. At times this may be the most reasonable and prudent course; war is not something to be glorified or desired. Yet, the frightening thing is that if such hesitancy

Services

Sunday: 9:00 AM
9:30 AM
10:30 AM
Wednesday: 7:00 PM

Elders:

Patrick Ledbetter
Brady McAlister
Jeff Nunn

Deacons:

Ben Hight
Blake McAlister
Walker McAnear
Sam Nunn
Lance Purcell
Justin Smiley
Trevor Yontz

Evangelist:

Kyle Pope

is taken too far it may cause one to wait until defense is impossible. What would the world have become if America had never become involved in World War II? What would have happened if Hitler had been successful in achieving his dream of establishing his 1000-year empire he called "The Third Reich?" One shutter to imagine.

As Christians much of our work involves alerting people to the spiritual warfare that we face in this life. We seek to warn non-Christians that rejection of

Christ leaves them in a state of **"enmity against God"** (Rom. 8:7, NKJV). We warn Christians that every day of our lives we are exposed to the **"fiery darts of the wicked one"** (Eph. 6:16). Our hope is that by alerting people to this spiritual battle they will take up spiritual arms without hesitation before defense becomes impossible.

As we engage in this effort, I'm afraid that sometimes we fail to recognize one important aspect of this spiritual struggle. While the Bible teaches that we, as Christians, individually engage in battles, in the broader view the fact is that the war is already over and Satan has lost! The book of Hebrews tells us that Jesus shared our humanity, **"that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil"** (Heb. 2:14). In John's visions in the book of Revelation, this victory is described (in part). The Holy Spirit tells us that, **"war broke out in heaven"** against the **"dragon and his angels"** (Rev. 12:7). The text identifies this **"dragon"** as Satan and tells us they **"did not prevail, nor was a place found for them in heaven any longer"** (Rev. 12:8-9). Because of this the text declares

"Now salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night, has been cast down" (Rev. 12:10). This is a victory for all the forces of Christ. They were victorious because **"they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death"** (Rev. 12:11). When Jesus overcame death, He offered us the way that we can escape our own slavery to sin and death.

This same point is also made in other passages. In the gospel of Luke, after Jesus sent out the seventy and they returned having cast out demons, He proclaimed, **"I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven"** (Luke 10:18). This doesn't seem to refer to an ancient fall in the past long before the events in the context of Jesus's words, but to the spiritual victory that was being accomplished as Christ's purpose was being fulfilled at the time. In the gospel of John, as Jesus promised the coming of the Holy Spirit, He declared, **"the ruler of the world is judged"** (John 16:11). As the hour approached for His death, the defeat of Satan was drawing closer. Finally, in Paul's letters to the Ephesians and to the Colossians the Holy Spirit tells us what Christ's death accomplished in the heavenly places. His death placed Jesus at the right hand of the Father (Eph. 1:20). It exalted Him above all heavenly and earthly authority (Eph. 1:20). It put all things under His feet

(Eph. 1:22). It reconciled all earthly and heavenly things unto Him **"having made peace through the blood of His cross"** (Col. 1:20). In simple terms, the war is over, and Christ won!

Is this to say that Satan can no longer tempt us or threaten our safety? Not at all. Peter described Satan as a **"lion seeking whom he may devour"** (1 Pet. 5:8). At the end of World War II stories are told of Japanese soldiers on islands in the Pacific who had not received word of the Japanese surrender. They continued fighting ignorant of the fact that they had been defeated. They posed just as serious a threat to Allied troops as they had during the war. The difference was that all hope of any victory was taken from them. It was just a matter of time. In the same way Satan



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