



**A**ND the LORD said, Behold, there is a place by me, and thou shalt stand upon a rock: (Exodus 33:21)

**N**OW thy it came about when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, a man was standing opposite him with his sword drawn in his hand, and Joshua went to him and said to him, "Are you for us or for our adversaries?" (Joshua 13:5)

Let us suppose that we are hauled before some great tribunal having the power to determine whether we live or die? Our Crime? Holding beliefs of which the whole world disagrees with just scanty exceptions. The beliefs we have espoused and propagated are completely new to the world of the day in which we have lived and are contrary to the entire power structure in place. How would we respond.

Of course, I refer to the great Continental Reformer, Martin Luther. He was arraigned by the Diet of Worms in 1521 – the convening authority headed by the Holy Roman Emperor, Charles V. Martin Luther had defied the Roman Catholic church and her titular head, the Pope, by preaching against several heresies propagated by Rome – indulgences, a number of unbiblical sacraments, the authority of the Pope in spiritual matters, the privilege of the believer to derive his faith and worship solely from Holy Scripture, and a host of other issues. When the council insisted that Luther recant, he courageously refused placing his very life in jeopardy saying: *"I cannot and will not recant anything, for to go against conscience is neither right nor safe. Here I stand, I can do no other, so help me God. Amen."*

As a result of Luther's refusal to recant, the Diet of Worms issued the Edict of Worms that labeled Luther a heretic and banned the reading of his writings. The edict made Luther an outlaw, and the understanding of the Diet of Worms was Luther would soon be arrested, punished, and likely executed.

Luther had stood alone facing the overwhelming powers of the Roman authorities of Europe. His life was in imminent danger. Through an amazing array of circumstances, Luther was enabled to flee to safe ground. Remember, Luther stood facing the wrath of

the Diet of Worms and yet, had the courage to defy that council based on his faith and religious convictions which he had discovered in Holy Writ. Well, not truly alone, for any who stand on the right hand of the Lord has the Lord standing on their left.

It is not always easy to stand for truths that we know with absolute certainty to be right; but when we do stand up for right, we do not truly stand alone though the world be against us. The escape of Luther from the multitude of powers gathered about him remind me of the similar escape of our Lord from those who wished to destroy Him:

**A**ND he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up for to read. 17 And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Esaias. And when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written, 18 The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, 19 To preach the acceptable year of the Lord. 20 And he closed the book, and he gave it again to the minister, and sat down. And the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on him. 21 And he began to say unto them, *This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears.* 22 And all bare him witness, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth. And they said, Is not this Joseph's son? 23 And he said unto them, *Ye will surely say unto me this proverb, Physician, heal thyself: whatsoever we have heard done in Capernaum, do also here in thy country.* 24 And he said, *Verily I say unto you, No prophet is accepted in his own country.* 25 *But I tell you of a truth, many widows were in Israel in the days of Elias, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, when great famine was throughout all the land; 26 But unto none of them was Elias sent, save unto Sarepta, a city of Sidon, unto a woman that was a widow. 27 And many lepers were in Israel in the time of Eliseus the prophet; and none of them was cleansed, saving Naaman the Syrian.* 28 And all they in the synagogue, when they heard these things, were filled with wrath, 29 And rose up, and thrust him out of the city, and led him unto the brow of the hill whereon their city was built, that they might cast him down headlong. 30 But he passing through the midst of them went his way," (Luke 4:6-30)

The Lord has shown us the Way to stand against every contrary wind. If we follow in His footsteps, bearing our certain crosses, He will "leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake." We never stand alone when we stand with Christ and His righteousness. In fact, the day will come when each one of us will stand alone facing the King of Glory just as did the Woman taken in Adultery who was, in every sense of the word, just like each of us. "9 And they which heard it, being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last: and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst. 10 When Jesus had lifted up himself, and saw none but the woman, he said unto her, *Woman, where are those thine accusers? hath no man condemned thee?* 11 She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, *Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more.*" (John 8:9-11) We have all been taken red-handed in our sins, and we shall one day come face to face with our Lord. Will we face Him imbued with His imputed righteousness on that day, or condemned by a multitude of unforgiven sins?

How could we not stand up for righteousness and the Lord's honor when He has never failed us in standing on our part? Remember Joshua before Jericho: "13 ¶ And it came to pass, when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted up his eyes and looked, and, behold, there stood a man over against him with his sword drawn in his hand: and Joshua went unto him, and said unto him, Art thou for us, or for our adversaries? 14 And he said, Nay; but as captain of the host of the LORD am I now come. And Joshua fell on his face to the earth, and did worship, and said unto him, What saith my lord unto his servant? \* 15 And the captain of the LORD's host said unto Joshua, Loose thy shoe from off thy foot; for the place whereon thou standest is holy. And Joshua did so." (Joshua 5:13-15). Who do you suppose this "Captain of the Hosts of the Lord" was? I believe it was none other than the pre-incarnate Christ. Why do I believe this? Because an angel is not worthy of worship, but Moses worshipped this Personage and

the ground before him was Holy Ground (just as Moses before the Burning bush). This Captain is the same who is mentioned in the last Book of our Bible:

**A**ND *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. 12 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. 13 And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God. 14 And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean."* (Revelations 19:11-14)

Life offers many occasions which require the Christian soldier (and we are all soldiers) to stand up for truth. Often these seem minor and of little significance, but all matters of truth and error are significant. If the soldier flees on the foreign field before the first shot fired in anger, what do you suppose he will do when the war toxins sound at his front door? We are judged by the small things as much as the great ones. The old axiom holds true: "He who will stand for nothing will fall for everything.

From the early moment of my consecration, I have been confronted with the tempting voices of fellow Christians to simply compromise just a little here or there in the doctrines and worship of the church. These suggestions are usually made from hearts that desire to see the church grow and are not malicious. But as a bishop, it falls to my lot to defend the faith – not just the major points of the faith, but every single principle of it as related in Holy Scripture. Surely, our church could grow to enormous proportions if we would only compromise here than there until we are no different from the many other fallen churches who have preceded us in that apostacy. To compromise a single principle of truth is to betray our Lord who died for us. It also betrays the labors and faith of those who established our church on the solid Rock of our Salvation which is Christ. It would dishonor Bishop Dees who sacrificed his personal fortune to establish a Holy Church edifying to God. It would discredit those men and women who stood up with Bishop Dees when courage called for it. It would discredit our former National Secretary who gave the best years of her life to insure that the Church remained anchored in Christ.

What about you, my friend? Will you stand to the line of battle, or do you prefer to sit this one out? Now is the time to prove your metal as a Christian believer in these perilous times.