

The Holy War Study Guide – Week 7

The Battle Begins and Ends

What primary Bible passages come to your mind as you read this assignment?

To what degree does the story accurately reflect Bible teaching?

On display in this reading assignment is the increasingly clear contrast between the character and methods of Diabolus and the character and methods of Immanuel. The closer the two characters come to each other in the story, the more pronounced are their differences. Essentially, the deceit and wily nature of Diabolus are on full display, and they are contrasted with the honesty and forthrightness of Immanuel. One is committed to total integrity and His words mean what they say. The other is committed to conniving tricks, and His ploys are merely pranks with cloaked designs.

At the outset of the reading, the *righteous* character of Immanuel is displayed in His resolve to keep His promise to take the town by force if they will not yield; therefore, the captains move swiftly to their battle positions; however, His *merciful* character is also displayed by His once more sending a delegation to solicit Mansoul's surrender.

When the leaders of Mansoul decide in a council of war to offer terms of surrender to Immanuel, whom do they choose as their messenger?

In the mouth of Loath-to-stoop, the strategy of Diabolus becomes clear. He wants to avoid total defeat, thereby gaining a foothold for later victory. His ultimate aim is to retain some advantage or access by which he might later subdue Mansoul completely, and the intent surfaces in each condition offered. Mr. Loath-to-stoop proposes eight different seemingly peaceful solutions. Summarize each proposition (the exercise of trying to summarize each proposition is very helpful; the reluctance of Diabolus to concede defeat and to lose all position of strength and authority becomes increasingly evident as the proposals proceed):

1. Proposition #1 – Divide Mansoul in half; allow a co-regency shared by Diabolus and Immanuel

Man cannot serve God with a divided heart. 1 Chronicles 16:9, - *those whose hearts are perfect toward Him*; "perfect" carries the connotation of hearts

undivided in their loyalties, hearts that entertain no thought of trusting in any source other than God.

2. Proposition #2 –
3. Proposition #3 –
4. Proposition #4 –
5. Proposition #5 –
6. Proposition #6 –
7. Proposition #7 –
8. Proposition #8 –

“The proud heart of man is loath to stoop to that absolute and entire obedience to Christ which He justly requires. There are many who would call themselves Christians on some of the conditions here proposed. They would resign half their hearts to Christ, and so serve two masters. Or, they would allow him to be a titular lord, a lord in name, but not in authority. Others would serve Jesus, in general, if permitted to enjoy the pleasures of sin occasionally. Others would submit to become religious yet entertain some darling lusts; or maintain correspondence and friendship with Satan; or take delight in the recollection of their pleasant sins. But all this partial and conditional submission is rejected; Christ will have all the heart or none. To be only “almost a Christian” is to be no Christian at all. The author, wishing to impress these things on the mind of the readers, has repeatedly said in the margin – mark this. They do, indeed, deserve remark, and let every reader consider whether he is offering some of these conditions, or whether he is saying,

‘Take my whole heart, and let it be
Forever closed to all but Thee”

(*The Holy War*, Illustrated with notes by George Burder, Reiner edition, 155-56).

Immanuel’s emphatic denials of Diabolus’ deceitful proposals for peace are met theologically, meaning that each is rejected on the basis of Bible truth. Identify ways that Immanuel Himself uses the works, words, or thoughts of His Father to rebuff the offers.

1. Response #1 –
2. Response #3 –
3. Response #4 –

4. Response #5 –

5. Response #6 –

6. Response #8 –

After Immanuel rejected all of the demands set forth by Loath-to-stoop, the infamous Ill-pause announces their intention to fight to the death. Upon hearing the defiant claim, Immanuel immediately prepares for battle by assigning His captains to their stations. Notice the proportion of emphasis given to the Ear and Eye gates in the battle assignments and in Bunyan’s actual description of the battle.

Captain	Color	Battle Position
Boanerges	Black	Ear-gate
Conviction	Pale	Ear-gate
Judgment	Red	Ear-gate
Execution	Red	Ear-gate
Credence	Red	Ear-gate
Good-hope	Blue	<i>Eye-gate</i>
Charity	Green	<i>Eye-gate</i>
Innocent	White	Around town
Patience	Black	Around town

During the assault on Ear-gate, Captain Conviction is wounded. What does the wound represent?

Immanuel’s forces were not the only ones to receive painful blows. The ministry of the forces of the Gospel began to wear away the resistance. The casualty assessment on Diabolus’ side is severe as some of his most vocal and notable fall in death:

Fatalities:

- Captain Boasting is slain (defending Ear-gate from Immanuel)
- Captain Secure is slain by Captain Conviction (died of sword thrust through the head while defending Ear-gate from Immanuel)
- Captain Bragman is slain by Captain Good-hope (died of a thrust to the breast while defending Eye-gate from Immanuel)

Casualties:

- Mr. Feeling is severely wounded in his eye while defending Ear-gate. Retreated.

- Lord Will-be-will is severely wounded in his leg. Greatly impaired. Hounded further through the streets by Captain Execution.
- Love-no-good is mortally wounded, though he continued to live for awhile.
- Mr. Prejudice, keeper of the Ear-gate under Lord Will-be-will, has his crown cracked by Captain Execution.
- Mr. Backward-to-all-but-naught, officer under Lord Will-be-will in charge of guns Heady and Highmind (near Ear-gate), is slain by Captain Execution.
- Captain Blindfold, keeper of Eye-gate, is slain by Captain Good-hope.
- Captain Treacherous is slain by Captain Execution.
- Mr. Ill-pause is fatally wounded by Captain Good-hope (at first, greatly impaired – his “brain-pan was cracked” – he died from wounds received while defending Eye-gate)

Other Losses:

- Retreat of Mr. Prejudice and Mr. Anything
- Ear-gate shaken
- Eye-gate broken open

”Success now begins to crown these efforts of the gospel ministry. The sinner no longer boasts of his fancied virtue, strength and goodness; sin is no more bragged of, and gloried in; the Word is now felt as well as heard; and even the stubborn of mind begins to bend. These and other enemies of Christ are obliged to submit to the victorious weapons of His grace” (*The Holy War*, Illustrated with notes by George Burder, Reiner edition, 161-62).

As we have come to expect from Immanuel, in the moment of success, He only shows even more mercy, raising the white flag with the three doves once more on Mount Gracious. What does the sight of the white flag spur in Diabolus’ heart?

As Immanuel responds to Diabolus, notice that Immanuel refers to Diabolus’ changing strategies. How very different from the unchanging Immanuel Diabolus proves to be! Yet, in spite of the changing tactics, the proposals of Diabolus do not improve in substance nor change in purpose:

“And failing to deceive when thou showedst thyself in black, thou hast now transformed thyself into an angel of light, and wouldst, to deceive, be now as a minister of righteousness.”

Bunyan places a perceptive question in the mouth of Immanuel to Diabolus:

“But if righteousness be such a beauty-spot in thine eyes now, how is it that wickedness was so closely stuck to thee before?”

Summarize the substance of Immanuel's argument that reformation of life and manners cannot produce salvation:

Immanuel's persistent refusal of any alternative settlement inspired by Diabolus, further unmasks Diabolus' truly destructive intentions. He commands his men to destroy the town and the townsmen that should they lose, they might "leave it a ruinous heap." Ironically, the more openly Diabolus declares his intent, the more open the city becomes to the advance of Immanuel and his army.

In phase two of the battle, the Ear-gate readily falls and is demolished before the onslaught of Immanuel's advance, and Immanuel now makes the gate that had been the most securely guarded fortress against him into a place for His throne.

"Thus was the promise fulfilled, Isaiah 29:18. 'In that day the deaf shall hear the words of the book;' and 30:18, 'the ears of the deaf shall be opened.' It is a glorious event, when the soul is made sincerely willing to listen to the Word of God, when it truly says, 'Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth;' The importance of opening up Ear-gate may be learned from that frequent expression in our Lord's discourses—'he that hath an ear to hear, let him hear.' May God bestow the 'hearing ear' upon every reader" (*The Holy War*, Illustrated with notes by George Burder, Reiner edition, 168).

As the soldiers advance into the town, whose strong house was straight ahead?

Before the captains could secure the town, they knew they must secure the house of Conscience – and the house did not open to them easily; however, once gained it proved an advantageous command center for an assault on the castle (heart) of the town where Diabolus lay entrenched. In spite of the restorative purposes of Immanuel, Mr. Conscience was stricken with fear. How did his fear manifest itself?