

The Holy War Study Guide – Week 17

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

To what degree does the story accurately reflect Bible teaching?

Diabolus' fixation with war councils would be almost humorous if his wiles were not so effective and eternally damning. Bunyan again depicts a huddled Diabolus conspiring resolutely to conquer. By this point in the story, however, gone are the flattering guise, the soft tones, and even the duplicitous tactics. When Diabolus rages the most fiercely, his aim is absolute destruction, not submission. It is this feature of Diabolus' character that Bunyan emphasizes by recounting Diabolus' effort to raise still another army, but this one full especially of 15,000 Blood-men.

Many of the scenes in this account are familiar to us by this time – the presence of Incredulity (Unbelief), the friendship between Diabolus and Incredulity, the strategic war council, the braggadocio of Diabolus, the presence of Doubters, and even the presence of the Master Scout for Mansoul, Mr. Prywell.

Bunyan gives us deeper insight into the origin of the Doubting Army than we have known before, and in so doing reminds us of *The Pilgrim's Progress*. Not far from the Valley of the Shadow of Death is the land of Doubting, nestled between the Valley and the land of Darkness. It is from here that the Doubters come. Somewhere, their country butts up against Hell-gate-hill. Their aim is to cause men to question their faith and the degree of their commitment to Shaddai's words.

The province of Loath-good, from which the second army of Blood-men come, also shares a boundary with Hell-gate-hill. Intriguingly Bunyan also identifies its location by a celestial reference point – under the Dog-star. Dog-star is a nickname for *Alpha Canis Majoris*, the “Big Dog” star that appears the brightest in the night sky. It is called Dog-star because it allegedly represents one of the two dogs that follow Orion the hunter (the other is *Canis Minoris*). Where the Blood-men are at work, one can also usually find some representation of the Doubters. The Bloody-men are probably representative of those who ardently persecute believers. Like the Doubters, the Blood-men aim to cause men to question their faith and the degree of their commitment to Shaddai's words, but they do so by assaulting men physically. They had even once won a seeming victory over Immanuel, forcing Him out of the kingdom of the universe. Bunyan likely draws their name from Psalm 139:19:

O that You would slay the wicked, O God; Depart from me, therefore, men of bloodshed (NASB).

Diabolus, with no small cause, puts much confidence in bloody persecutors, for their rage has seldom been in vain. Though the true disciples of Christ have been enabled to stand their ground; a great multitude of professors become apostates through fear of death. Satan also well remembers that his Jewish blood-men prevailed (by divine permission) to force Immanuel himself out of the world (*The Holy War*, Illustrated with notes by George Burder, Reiner edition, 418).

The compiled list of eight captains of Blood-men is a veritable “Who’s Who” of spiritual villainy and spiritual shipwreck. All are Bible characters with the exception of Captain Pope. All of the Bible characters lead two separate bands, but Captain Pope leads only one – but his one band encompassed the spirits of all of the other bands in the army.

Captain	Bands Lead	Colors	Scutcheon (shield with crest)
Incredulity is the Head of the Army			
Cain (Genesis 4:8)	The Zealous & Angry	red	Murdering club
Nimrod (Genesis 10:8-9)	The Tyrannical & Encroaching	red	Great blood-hound
Ishmael (Genesis 21:9-10)	Mocking & Scorning	red	One mocking at Abraham’s Isaac
Esau (Genesis 27:42)	Those begrudging another the blessing & those who execute private revenge on others	red	One privately lurking to murder Jacob
Saul (1 Samuel 18:11)	Groundlessly Jealous & Devilishly Furious	red	Three bloody darts cast at David
Absalom (2 Samuel 17:16)	Those who will kill a father or a friend & those who will treat one kindly with one hand and knife him with the other	red	A son pursuing his father’s blood
Judas (Matthew 26:14-16)	Those who will sell a man’s life for money & those who will betray a friend with a kiss	red	30 pieces of silver
Pope	The spirits of all other captains	red	Stake, the flame, and good man in it

When confronted by the awful demands backed by the Blood-men and the Doubting Army, the Mansouliaus send the dreadful request to Immanuel along with a single line petition, “Lord save Mansoul from bloody men” (*Deliver me from the workers of iniquity, and save me from bloody men, Psalm 59:2, KJV*).

Immanuel responds by placing Captain Experience in the market place, Captains Credence, Patience, and Self-denial on the side of the town where the Bloody-men are positioned, and Captains Good-hope, Charity, Innocent, and Experience with Lord Will-be-will over against the Doubting Army. What significance might there be to where Immanuel places these captains and leaders?

What is the strategic role that Captain Self-Denial plays?

Why do you think that orders were given by Immanuel not to slay the Blood-men?

Interestingly, the Blood-men prove to be chicken-hearted “when they come to see themselves matched and equaled.”

Immanuel's / Mansoul's Dealings with the Attacking Armies

With the Bloody-men

Various shires or counties make up the province of Loath-good from which the Blood-men come.

- Blindmanshire
- Blindzealshire
- Malice in the county of Envy

The spirit of persecution will be found to originate, either in a blind understanding or a superstitious zeal, or cruel malice and envy. To the two former, Immanuel showed mercy. Saul, who was once a bloody man, obtained mercy because he did it ignorantly (*The Holy War*, Illustrated with notes by George Burder, Reiner edition, 425).

With the Four Doubters & Evil Questioning

Before we get to the actual interaction of Immanuel with the Four Doubters, a brief recovery of their working their way into Mansoul will be helpful. The Doubters were election, vocation, salvation, and grace doubters respectively. While the rest of the Doubters were in retreat and scattering, these four managed to work their way inside the town and find a warm reception at the home of a remaining Diabolonian named Evil-questioning, who had long been a “very great trouble to Mansoul.”

Doubts will return again and again, and while there is such a thing as evil-questioning in the heart, they will find a harbor there (*The Holy War*, Illustrated with notes by George Burder, Reiner edition, 428).

While they conspired wishfully together for the demise of Mansoul, their treasonous speech was overheard by Mr. Diligence (later called Great Diligence), a ready detective of sin (2 Peter 1:15, 10). With the expert help of Mr. Diligence, Lord Will-be-will quickly apprehends the four doubters and Evil-questioning based on Mr. Diligence's intelligence.

The ensuing trial of the five characters came about because Lord Will-be-will ascertained that a public trial by jury would be better for Mansoul than a quick and quiet execution.

- Trial of Evil-questioning
Evil-questioning attempts to dismiss the solid evidence and multiple indictments against him by merely misrepresenting his identity. He counters the charges by claiming his name is actually "Honest Inquiry" and pleading for allowance that man "even in the worst of times, and that too amongst the worst of men, may make an honest-inquiry after things, without running the danger of death."

The witnesses brought to bear on Evil-questioning were Lord Will-be-will and Diligence, and Evil-questioning skillfully attempts to describe his actions as manifestations of hospitality and love. The Lord Mayor's potent response is worth giving prolonged thought: "Though it was a virtue to entertain strangers, yet it was treason to entertain the King's enemies."

The summary trials of the four doubters progress with little incident, and all five characters are destined to die. Bunyan is not intending to represent a church-state society where heretics and profligates are automatically executed, but he continues to reiterate the importance of mortifying one's flesh and all of its members.