

We Do Not Wrestle against Flesh and Blood

(Eph. 6:12)

We, as members in the kingdom of light, are targeted by the kingdom of darkness, and this war will continue till the end of days. This fact must be clear before our eyes at all times: **"The children of God and the children of the devil are manifest"** (1 Jn. 3:10); and **"You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thorn bushes or figs from thistles? Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit"** (Mt. 7:16-17).



We should also, as children of God, remember that **"[h]ere we have no continuing city, but we seek the one to come"** (Heb. 13:14) and that we are not from this world, as the Lord tells us: **"If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. Remember the word that I said to you, 'A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you"** (Jn. 15:19-20).

Indeed, the devil is unhappy with the growing Coptic Orthodox Church all over the world, and he is not happy with the thousands of liturgies that are offered on the altar every day, nor with the daily praises and spiritual meetings that are full of worshipers seeking repentance and true discipleship to Christ. He is also unhappy when he sees new churches being built everywhere or when he sees the love that is growing among the members of the kingdom of God. So he tries by all means to push the children of darkness to attack and wound the body of Christ again, but, however vicious his attacks may be, he will not succeed in defeating the Church, as in the past he could not defeat Christ or get rid of His doctrines. In this matter, St. Peter the apostle, through the Holy Spirit, commands us: **"Casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you. Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Resist him, steadfast in the faith... May the God of all grace, who called us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a while, perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle you"** (1 Pet. 5:7-10).

St. Paul says that the devil has authority and works in people that are not obeying the truth when he speaks of **"[t]he prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience"** (Eph. 2:2), but at the same time he draws our attention to recognize how strong the weapons we have are: **"My brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil... Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication"** (Eph. 6:10-18).

Finally, we cannot understand the recent events, namely the attacks on the church in Egypt, in a superficial way. The war between the kingdom of darkness and the kingdom of God is great and will continue till the Day of Judgment, and, if we steadfastly keep our membership in the kingdom of light, the devil will keep fighting against us. But **prayer is our strong fortress and powerful weapon** during the hour of the **fiery trial** (1 Pet. 4:12) and **the power of darkness** (Lk. 22:53), so we will always be in the position of power, chanting with the psalm, **"The Lord is my strength and song, and He has become my salvation"** (Ps. 118:14), and singing with St. Paul the apostle: **"Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written: 'For Your sake we are killed all day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.' Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us."** (Rom. 8:35-37)

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