

LEGION

“Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels? (Matt 26:53 KJV)

“And Jesus asked him, saying, What is thy name? And he said, Legion: because many devils were entered into him.” (Luke 8:30 KJV)

In the Bible the word “legion” is used only in the Gospels and refers to legions of both angels and demons. It is generally conceded that in the time of Jesus a “legion” in the Roman army consisted of 6,000 soldiers. These were divided into 10 “cohorts” each with 600 soldiers. Each “cohort” had 6 “centurions” each with authority over 100 soldiers.

Isn't it interesting that legions of both angels and demons act as “one” while the soldiers of Jesus seem to be hopelessly divided?

The discipline of the Roman legions is illustrated by the “testudo” formation. This is the Latin word for “tortoise”. When commanded to do so, the Roman soldiers would lock their shields together and form what looked like a giant tortoise. This not only protected them from projectiles hurled at them laterally, but also those raining down upon them from above. This formation was made possible by the obedience of every soldier. Those who did not obey their commanding officer put everyone at risk. What a tragedy that this kind of unity is normally not seen in the church.

Let us back up and take a brief overview of Christian unity.

- The followers of Jesus begin as one. This is clear! **“For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body” (1 Cor. 12:13)**. It doesn't matter what race we come from or what social strata we represent, when we are baptized into Christ the Lord adds us to only one body.
- Consequently, we do not “make” the unity of this One Body, but we “keep it” (Eph. 4:3).
- “Keeping” this unity is not easy. For example, when Onesimus was baptized into Christ in Rome, he became “one” with his master in Colossae. The fact that they were separated by both distance and social standing did not keep them from being brothers in the same family. That's why Paul urged Philemon to receive him forever as a brother in Christ (Phile. 15, 16).
- Among many other things, keeping the unity of the Spirit involves obeying those who rule over us and submitting to their authority (Heb. 13:17). God has placed spiritual leaders in His Kingdom much as the Roman government placed officers in their legions. The Kingdom of Christ, however, is not like the Roman government (Lk. 22:24 - 27). In the Body of Christ greatness is not achieved by titles and appointment, but by service and love.
- The Law of Moses describes two types of slavery (Ex. 21:1 - 6). The Law slave couldn't wait to be liberated from having to obey his master. The love slave volunteered to be obedient to his master forever. Obedience in the family of God is based on love, not law.
- The world's largest orchestra was said to have assembled in Vancouver BC., Canada. It consisted of the entire Vancouver Symphony Orchestra, plus about 6,400 band students. Even though they played different instruments and different notes at different times, they still had harmony because they all played the same music under the same conductor.
- When members of His Body do everything in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, we also experience harmony (Col. 3:17). In Christ there is no Jew or Greek, bond or free, male or female, but we are all “one” in Christ Jesus (Gal. 3:28).
- In 1943 Frank Capra produced the documentary “Divide and Conquer” to describe Hitler's strategy to destroy his enemies and rule the world. The devil uses this same strategy on the followers of Christ. The devil knows that if we are “one” the world will be “won” (Jn. 17:21). Please do not be ignorant of the devil's devices (2 Cor.2:11)!