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WIELDING THE POWER OF PRAYER:

The Use Of Prayer In Conflict

Throughout early Christian history prayers offered by soldiers, secular lords, monks, and clergy have often beseeched God for divine intervention on their behalf for numerous reasons, for instance protection in battle, victory over their enemies, and safe guarding their souls should they die in battle. David Bachrach points out the practicality of these prayers to which they availed themselves, for example, as a spiritual defense against their enemies, a means to reduce the apprehension of soldiers going into battle concerned for the fate of their souls when facing other Christian soldiers in battle, and an assurance that there would be a place in heaven for them if they died in combat for Christ in warfare sanctioned by the Church.¹ Stories of militant archbishops, bishops, and clergy can be found alongside soldiers and secular lords who took up arms such as St Germanus of Auxerre (c.378-448) in battle against a mixed force of Pict and Saxon warriors near St. Albans in what was referred to as the Alleluia Battle in c.429 as recorded by Constantius of Lyon² or even the popes in Rome, e.g. John VIII (?-882) who fought the Saracens when they raided Italy, or likewise Benedict VIII (c.980-1024) while embroiled in combat in order to subdue political opponents.

Many monks and holy men went so far as to transform themselves into an image of a knight as they took on the worldly appearance of a warrior in the battle against the devil. *Saints in Shining Armor: Martial Asceticism and Masculine Models of Sanctity, ca. 1050- 1250* by Katherine Smith, depicts eighteen recorded accounts between the years 1050-1250 of such *milites Christi* or “soldiers of Christ”³ in assorted monastic hagiographies she evaluated donning real armor for spiritual battle. While secular lords

1 David S. Bachrach, *Religion and the Conduct of War c.300-c.1215*, (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2003), 106-107, 118.

2 Constantius of Lyon, *de Vita Germani*. (c.480).

3 Katherine Allen Smith. “Saints in Shining Armor: Martial Asceticism and Masculine Models of Sanctity, ca. 1050-1250.” *Speculum*, Vol. 83, no.3 (July 2008), 573-574.

and bishops alike donned armor, with weapon in hand and marched at the head of Christian armies to engage in physical battle against the earthly enemies of God, the monks and other ecclesiastics would battle the devil in a much loftier arena - the spiritual realm - and wage war in perpetual battle not only for their own souls but on behalf of all Christendom. Moreover, this specific use of prayer wielded by monks and clergy proved to be a powerful weapon against adversaries of not only the spiritual realm, but in the temporal world, as well.

Centuries before the birth of Jesus, priests and prophets in the Old Testament utilized prayer and relayed the word of God prior to battle to ease the fear of the Israelites to strengthen their resolve and confirm the affirmation of God's commitment to them. Throughout the Book of Deuteronomy this relationship between prayer and victory in battle manifests itself repeatedly in verses such as "O Israeli approach this day unto battle...let not your hearts faint, fear not, and do not tremble... the Lord your God is he that goeth with you, to fight for you against your enemies, to save you"⁴ and "Ye shall not fear them: for the Lord your God shall fight for you."⁵ Not only did the priests boost the morale of the Israelites through the use of prayer, Deuteronomy 2:34 and 20:1-20 further conveys that the commands issued by God to the soldiers in the manner with which to wage war, also assured a safe outcome for women and children captives. Likewise, several books of the Old Testament emphasize the overall power of God to grant strength for battle,⁶ be strong and have courage,⁷ and ensure that God is fighting on behalf of the Israelites and they need not fear.⁸ However, it is in Zechariah 4:6 that the true power of God is expressed over their enemies. Ultimately, it would only be through prayer and the Spirit, not by might, i.e. force of arms or worldly power, that they would overcome their enemies.

4 Deuteronomy 20:3-4.

5 Deuteronomy 3:21-22.

6 Psalms 18:39.

7 Joshua 1:9.

8 Psalms 138:7.

With the return of the exiled Jews, several sects such as the Pharisees, Sadducees, Essenes, and later the Zealots, came into existence sometime during the second century BCE (Before Common Era) and each had their own beliefs concerning the return of a messianic figure who would unite Israel once again, and the methods which God would employ to vanquish their enemies. While each faction represented the same religious practices regarding Judaism, their political agendas and dispositions toward the Romans could not be more divided. Of these various sects, Josephus, a Jewish historian, acknowledges that the Pharisees and Essenes were two apocalyptic sects who observed a more traditional adherence to Torah, but further noted that the Essenes adhered to an even more extreme interpretation of the law.⁹ The Essenes, whose isolated communal and disciplined life style could be found in the early Christian desert ascetics, believed that victory would be delivered by divine intervention in a great battle for the freedom of Israel as recorded by Josephus during the first Jewish War 66-73 CE.¹⁰ They believed that the day would come when the Messiah would be sent by God to free them and punish their oppressors and all evildoers. This would be done during a final battle between the Sons of Light and the Sons of Darkness as depicted in what is commonly referred to as the War Scroll, one of several Dead Sea Scrolls discovered at Qumran in 1947.¹¹

According to the War Scroll, the chief priest, priests, and the Levites would all play a significant role in the imminent battle against the Sons of Darkness, as well as the forces that aligned with them. While he marched alongside the chiefs of the tribes, the priest would be adorned in specific attire for battle, “a girdle of fine cloth of flax embroidered with blue, purple and scarlet threads, a many-coloured design produced by a craftsman, and a fine linen tunic and fine linen breeches

9 Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews*, The Works of Flavius Josephus, translated by William Whiston, Book XIII, 5. 9.

10 Josephus, *War of the Jews*, The Works of Flavius Josephus, translated by William Whiston, Book II, 8. 1-14.

11 For a full translation of the War Scroll see Geza Vermes, *The Complete Dead Sea Scrolls in English: Revised Edition*, (New York: Penguin Books, 2004), 201-230.

and a mitred turban [on their heads]. They shall not take them to the sanctuary f[or] they are ba[ttle] raiments”¹² and are responsible for the sounding of the trumpets before, during and after the battle. “And the Priests shall blow the trumpets continuously ...”¹³ The War Scroll further references numerous examples depicting the priest sounding the trumpets, helping assemble the troops and directly participating in the battle which would insinuate that there was no conflict between the roles of both a religious leader and a participant in sanctioned warfare. The presence of the chief priest and the priest who accompanied the army and found himself among the soldiers, is of no small consequence. Their prayers and admiration to God for the blessings that Israel received, the righteousness of their struggle, and the power of God in the ultimate victory over the enemies of Israel, cannot be understated as it empowered the soldiers to forge into battle.¹⁴ The language in the War Scroll is unmistakably militant and aggressive in its delivery, the roles of the high priest and the accompanying priest are explicitly defined, seemingly ordained by divine directives from God. While this is a very limited account to the references of martial and spiritual combat that takes place in the Old Testament, together they form a basis in the Bible that ecclesiastics can draw from when seeking affirmation regarding the influence of prayer in battle.

It is through the conversion of Paul the Apostle (c.4 BCE-c.64 CE) in the first century CE (Common Era) and his subsequent travels around the Mediterranean where he preached to the gentiles of the region, that his letters in the New Testament of the Bible provide a glimpse of the militancy of the early Christian Church. Several of Paul’s writings such as Ephesian 6:10-18, commonly referred to as the ‘Armor of God’, transformed military terminology into metaphors which provided easily recognizable imagery among the early Christian followers. Some of this terminology is revealed in his writings as analogous examples, e.g. the breastplate of righteousness, a shield

12 Ibid., 227-228.

13 Ibid., 228.

14 Ibid., 218-221.

of faith, a helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit. Moreover, Paul's description of prayer, specifically in verse 18, is also an illustration that describes the way in which the help of the Spirit will provide for victory. Similarly, in 2 Corinthians 10:3-5 as well as 20:15, Colossian 2:15, and Ephesians 1:21 it is through faith in Christ, the spirit of the Lord, and the use of prayer, that a stronghold is provided as a defense against outside forces of the evil found in the world. These same verses in retrospect proclaim that the strongholds of the devil and wicked ones shall be thrown down and cannot avail against Christ and his message of love and salvation. These letters from Paul written to the fledgling Christian communities sought to strengthen the conviction of the early Christians. They were not only involved in 'spiritual warfare' for their soul against evil, but also in daily battles whereby they resisted inclusion and compliance in Roman society regarding ritual sacrifices to the gods of the Roman pantheon.

As Christianity spread throughout the region, communities of anchorites and coenobitic 'monks' began to appear in the desert and wilderness areas of Egypt, Palestine, and Syria, where they were embattled in spiritual warfare against the devil and the demons found in the wastelands. In the *Life of Saint Anthony* written by St. Athanasius (296-373 CE), Antony an ascetic monk, is recorded battling demons and lists several confrontations both physically and spiritually that took place between Antony and the demons that tormented him. Antony's preferred weapon of choice while battling his demons was prayer. Antony explicitly pointed out what the demons feared and which weapons God granted to him (and others) in order to fight off the various evil beings: "They fear the fasting, the watching, the prayers, the meekness, and the silence of the ascetics..."¹⁵ Antony deployed the spiritual weapons of prayer and the physical sign of the cross in order to defeat his host of demons, evil spirits, and the devil that attacked his faith, spirit, and physical body. The use of words fortify, blows, assault, wrestle, and conflict are examples of terms often used

15 Athanasius. "Life of Saint Anthony." *Early Christian Biographies*, edited by Roy J. Deferrari. The Fathers of the Church, volume 15. Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1952. ProQuest Ebook Central, 163.

to describe Antony's struggles, which gave a vivid image of the spiritual and physical battle that he found himself engaged in. The reference to martial metaphors when Antony spoke of the enemy was apparent as he gave credence to his demons as if they were actual combatants, i.e., "like soldiers in full armor,"¹⁶ "troops of soldiers."¹⁷ And, if the demons were defeated using one tactic, they would assail Antony in other ways, even utilizing stealth to assault him. Antony was in constant spiritual and physical conflict with various forms of demons, evil spirits, and phantoms while living the life of an ascetic in the Egyptian desert. His weapons against the demons of fornication, temptation, and deception were unrelenting reliance on continuous prayer, faith in God, and his belief that because of this devotion to God, the demons and the devil himself were powerless to hurt him. What fortified his soul and strengthened his resolve was his regimen of fasting and solitude from the daily affairs of men. This preparation or training for the ascetic life resembled that of a soldier preparing for battle, but instead of the sword and shield, Antony wielded the power of prayer and the sign of the cross as his weapons which were empowered by God to defeat the enemy.

Four centuries later in England, Guthlac (673-714), an Anglo-Saxon soldier and ascetic monk turned spiritual warrior, forsook his royal heritage when the Holy Spirit showed the rewards that awaited him in heaven if he became a *miles Christi*.¹⁸ The transformation from a secular to spiritual warrior led him toward the life of a hermit is recorded in Felix of Croyland's the *Vita Sancti Guthlaci*.¹⁹ During his life as a recluse, Guthlac deploys his spiritual weapons, songs, and prayers to God when confronted by spiritual and seemingly physical peril, presented as demons in disguise. As with Paul and Antony, Guthlac's use of military metaphors is a continuation of an early tradition by way of linking the

16 *Ibid.*, 171.

17 *Ibid.*, 156.

18 John Edward Damon, *Soldier Saints and Holy Warriors*, (Burlington: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2003), 62-64, 75-81.

19 Felix of Croyland, *Life of Saint Guthlac*, ed. and trans. by Bertram Colgrave (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1956).

use of martial imagery to combat evil during spiritual warfare. Felix's account of Guthlac's spiritual battles contains all the weaponry and pageantry that one would imagine a heroic warrior figure would bear, and depicts these battles in words and imagery as if they were actual physical battles that took place. By comparing these spiritual weapons of faith, prayer, and song with actual swords, spears and shields,²⁰ Christians and pagans alike related to the power projected by Christ in a warrior society. The display of common weapons and armor used in Anglo-Saxon society enabled Guthlac to create the connection needed to reveal the power that God channeled through the outward display of prayer.

It was not only holy men, hermits and monks that brought forth the power of prayer to be put into service against the enemies of God. Early Christian soldiers and ecclesiastics who served in or were stationed with Roman legions, believed that through their collective prayers God influenced the outcome of battles. Several narratives of the direct affects that prayer is said to have granting victory can be found within the accounts of the Roman twelfth 'Thundering' legion in c. 174 CE²¹ whose prayers for water to quench their thirst and the subsequent deluge causing their enemies to be washed away and crushed by mud slides. The defeat of a Persian army during the siege of Nisibis in 337 CE by Saint Jacob (?-c. 337-341) after praying for the defense of the city and cursing the enemy, caused them to succumb to a plague of insects.²² After Constantine's conversion to Christianity in 313 CE with the issuance of the Edict of Milan, Christianity spread throughout Roman society due in part to the inclusion of Christians in the military and its organizational resemblance between the Church hierarchy and Roman legions. Subsequently with Christianity being acknowledged as the official state religion in 380 CE under Roman Emperor Theodosius, (347-395) Christians once again openly served in the military and

20 Damon, *Soldier Saints and Holy Warriors*, 65.

21 Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, updated ed., trans. C. F. Cruse (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 2015), 161-162.

22 Theodoret, *Ecclesiastical History*, translated by Blomfield Jackson, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979), 91-2.

participated in combat. In truth, early Christian writers showed no aversion to Christians serving as soldiers in the Roman armies or as soldiers in general, and there were legions comprised entirely of Christian soldiers²³ who served in the Roman army side-by-side with bishops and priests. With the conversion to Christianity, Roman society and the military also incorporated the Christian ideas on warfare, intolerance of pagan (especially polytheistic) religions, and overt hostility against heretical views on orthodox Christian beliefs during the late Roman Empire.²⁴

It was Ambrose, bishop of Milan who provided the first recorded Christian prayer for victory: ‘Turn, O Lord, and raise the standards of your faith. No military eagles, nor flight of birds here lead the army but your name Lord Jesus and your worship.’²⁵ In book 1 of *De Officiis Ministrorum*, “On the Duties of the Clergy,” In chapters 29, 35 and 40, Ambrose wrote about those who had the right to enact violence in a just war, how to wage and why to wage war, and the role that the clergy should play. Several of the early jurists of the Christian church spoke about the righteousness of ‘just war,’ the right to wage it, and how to conduct it. Saint Augustine of Hippo (354-430) in *The City of God* written sometime around 413-426, Saint Ambrose’s (c.340-397) treatise *On the Duty of the Clergy* in c.391, and later in the 13th century Saint Thomas Aquinas’s (1225-1274) work, the *Summa Theologica*.²⁶

23 In 172 CE, the twelfth legion led by Marcus Aurelius, was surrounded by enemies, hemmed in by the geography of the land, and cut off from water. Accordingly, the Christian soldiers of the twelfth legion were requested to pray to God for relief and water for the parched Roman army. As a result, or their prayers, it began to rain, quenching the thirst of the legions, and a storm ensued that wreaked havoc against the enemy forces surrounding the legions. After that the Marcus Aurelius was said to have renamed the twelfth legion to the Thundering legion for the effects their prayers had on delivering the legions from their enemies.

24 See H. A. Drake, “Lambs into Lions: Explaining Early Christian Intolerance,” *Past & Present* 153 (Nov. 1996), 3-36.

25 Peter Clemoes and Kathleen Hughes, ed. “The Ethic of War in Old English.” *England before the Conquest. Studies in Primary Sources Presented to Dorothy Whitelock*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971), 269-82, at 270. 44De Fide, II.xvi.141-2, a prayer for Gratian fighting the Goths, cited by J.E. Cross.

26 Thomas Aquinas. *Summa Theologica, Secunda Secundæ Partis*, specifically in question 40 regarding war.

Though at first these writings may seem counter to the founding Christian beliefs of peace and pacifism, Augustine and Ambrose seem to have taken a positive stand on Christians using justifiable force and showed no aversion to service in the military.²⁷ While Martin of Tours, who served with an elite cavalry unit of Roman army, took an opposing view and advised Emperor Julian that it was unlawful for him to fight. Regardless, Martin volunteered to confront the ‘barbarian forces’ without armor, while he trusted that the power of God and prayer would cause enemy armies to turn back.²⁸ However, it was Bernard of Clairvaux, a Cistercian monk who preached for the second crusade (1090-1153) and offered support to his friend, the grand master of the temple, who defended the use of violence in his treatise the *Order of the Temple: De laude novae militiae*.

In Bernard’s argument to justify the Templars’ role in a just war concept through religion, and the right to kill or use violence against others, he developed the theological basis for crusader knights. *De laude novae militiae*, literally interpreted as “In Praise of the New Knighthood,” Bernard’s views on the sacredness and justified fighting and killing for God assured knights that dying or inflicting death for Christ’s sake was not a sin and that they would receive forgiveness in the form of indulgences. ‘This is, I say, a new kind of knighthood. . . It ceaselessly wages a twofold war both against flesh and blood and against a spiritual army of evil in the heavens. . . And when war is waged by spiritual strength against vices or demons, this, too, is nothing remarkable, praiseworthy as it is, for the world is full of monks. He is truly a fearless knight and secure on every side, for his soul is protected by the armor of faith just as his body is protected by armor of steel. He is thus doubly

27 See Lawrence G. Duggan, *Armsbearing and The Clergy in the History and Canon Law of Western Christianity*, (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2013) for an in-depth overview of the development of the right for clergy to wield weapons, don armor and participate in warfare.

28 Sulpicius Severus, *On the Life of St. Martin*. Translation and Notes by Alexander Roberts, *In A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*, (New York, 1894); Christopher Donaldson, *Martin of Tours: Parish Priest, Mystic and Exorcist*, (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1980), 37-40.

armed and need fear neither demons nor men.”²⁹ Countering the argument that no Christian should kill, Bernard restated his defense of the use of force: “Certainly it is proper that the nations who let both swords of the faithful fall upon the necks of the foe, in order to destroy every high thing exalting itself against the knowledge of God, which is the Christian faith.”³⁰ In the same writings, Bernard clearly made a distinction between the clergy and the secular use of arms and drew a clear line on the clerical use of force, where he advised pope Eugenius III (1088-1153) that the “spiritual sword should be drawn by the hand of the priest, the material sword by the hand of the knight, but clearly at the bidding of the priest and at the command of the emperor.”³¹ While many of these ideas appealed to the warrior monks who favored a more direct course of action in holy military orders that developed, not all were enticed to partake in physical combat.

As the monastic revival began to take hold and spread throughout Western Europe in the 10th century, monks, who were called upon to utilize their greatest weapon, prayer, incorporated more militant terminology into their liturgy, and emboldened biblical heroes with their writings. One consideration for the increased militancy of the spiritual reinforcements was due to the retirement of aging warriors and leading members of the aristocracy to monastic communities who had taken vows at the end of their lives. The influx of these individuals with similar upbringings: fighting skills, hunting, hawking, learning how to lead men and honing their skills toward a life of combat, influenced how these prayers were written and how their devotion to God was expressed. As for the warriors who could no longer serve on the battlefield, this did not mean that this was where the fight ended. Their energy and passion for fighting was redirected into the spiritual war against the devil and his hordes of demons by utilizing the power of prayer. Furthermore, in her book *War and the Making of*

29 Bernard of Clairvaux, *In Praise of the New Knighthood*, prologue-chapter five, translated by Conrad Greenia oco, from Bernard of Clairvaux: Treatises Three, Cistercian Fathers Series, Number Nineteen. (Kalamazoo: Cistercian Publications, 1996), 127-145, Chapter 1.

30 Ibid., Chapter 3.

31 Bernard of Clairvaux, *Five Books on Consideration: Advise to a Pope*.

Medieval Monastic Culture, Katherine Smith covers this transformation of the monastic community from monks into ‘soldiers of Christ.’³² The power of these prayers and the beseeching of God’s divine favor for intervention in military endeavors was so important that during his conquest of England in 1066, Duke William II of Normandy transported monks, clergy, and several bishops among his troops to further ensure his victory over the English. Bachrach mentions that prior to the Battle of Hastings on 10 October 1066, there were vigils held and that the priest continued a routine of persistent prayer to God for victory utilizing portable chapels.³³

Along with prayers and devotional writings, the use of imagery played an important part in ancient and medieval military tactics of the time: weapons, shield markings, and various items designate as holy objects or relics were viable weapons and offered protection as well. At the Battle of Milvian Bridge in 312 CE, which eventually led to the conversion of Emperor Constantine the Great (272-337) to Christianity in the later years of his life.³⁴ Lactantius (c. 250-c. 325), an advisor to Constantine, gave an account of God’s intervention on behalf of Constantine in *Divinae institutions* and described how in a dream God had instructed Constantine to have his soldiers paint the Chi-Rho symbol on their shields prior to the start of the battle.³⁵ Eusebius of Caesarea (c. 260-340) recorded the vision from God that Constantine reportedly had the night before the battle and again later in the early morning:

He said that about noon, when the day was already beginning to decline, he saw with his own eyes the trophy of a cross of light in the heavens, above the sun, and bearing the inscription, conquer by this. At this sight he himself was struck with amazement, and his whole army also, which followed him on this expedition, and witnessed the

32 Katherine Allen Smith. *War and the Making of Medieval Monastic Culture*. Studies in the History of Medieval Religion vol. 37. (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2011).

33 Bachrach, *Religion and the Conduct of War*, 84-85.

34 Similar stories of God’ intervention on behalf of Roman soldiers who prayed for victory over enemies or succor are recorded in the accounts of the twelfth Thundering legion in c. 172 CE.

35 J. F Matthews and Donald MacGillivray Nicol, “Constantine I: Roman Emperor,” <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Constantine-I-Roman-emperor#ref384509>.

miracle... then in his sleep the Christ of God appeared to him with the same sign which he had seen in the heavens, and commanded him to make a likeness of that sign which he had seen in the heavens, and to use it as a safeguard in all engagements with his enemies... Now it was made in the following manner. A long spear, overlaid with gold, formed the figure of the cross by means of a transverse bar laid over it. On the top of the whole was fixed a wreath of gold and precious stones; and within this, the symbol of the Savior's name, two letters indicating the name of Christ by means of its initial characters, the letter P (rho) being intersected by X (chi) in its center: and these letters the emperor was in the habit of wearing on his helmet at a later period.³⁶

William of Poitiers records an account of Duke William II of Normandy, bringing the relics of Saint Valery of Luxeuil to the Norman port of departure prior to the invasion of England in order to calm the winds and sea, and to ensure safe passage for his ships carrying his troops and horses.³⁷ Even the objects carried or worn by saints such as swords or lances, boasted an impression of holiness. Martial weapons once used by these soldiers of Christ, were an extension of the saint themselves and conferred an aura of sacredness about them when called into action.³⁸ Even books were a tool of defense used to combat evil in the daily spiritual battle that Christians waged. In an article written by Kathleen Openshaw, *Weapons in the Daily Battle: Images of the Conquest of Evil in the Early Medieval Psalter*, the use of a daily devotional book called a psalter, which included the Book of Psalms, calendars for the days of the saints and other daily hymns and prayers for Christians, Openshaw skillfully shows that they frequently contained images of spiritual warfare of the saints, apostles, and other biblical heroes battling against hell's legions of demons and devils. These daily devotional books, which she refers to as the 'weapons in the daily battle' of good versus evil in a spiritual battle waged by monks, were

36 Paul Halsall, "Eusebius: The Conversion of Constantine." Medieval Sourcebook [https://sourcebooks.fordham.edu/halsall/source/conv-const.asp]. Chapter XXXI; R. Gerberding and J. H. Moran Cruz, *Medieval Worlds* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2004), 55.

37 William of Poitiers, *Gesta Guillelmi*, 108-113.

38 Smith, *War and the Making of Medieval Monastic Culture*, 176-179.

an important instrument in defeating the spiritual temptations that plagued medieval Christians in their everyday lives. In a reference to a St. Alban's psalter that had a collection of similes attributed to Saint Anselm (1033-1109), a distinct and direct connection to military terms was used metaphorically to show how these soldiers of God should dress and prepare for battle. "In the Anselmian text, not only is every item of a soldier's military dress and equipment allegorized as a spiritual weapon, but so too is his horse. The writer states that as each and every soldier fights his enemy with a horse, so the spiritual combatant should use his body against the Devil."³⁹

Throughout early Christianity, imploring God's intervention in physical and spiritual battles on behalf of early Christians using prayer can be traced from its earliest origins in the Bible. Relying on Old Testament Scripture and New Testament gospels, bishops, monks, and priest waged not only spiritual but temporal warfare on and off the battlefield throughout history. A clear correlation between military and martial metaphors is evident with the use of prayer by ecclesiastics in the way they prayed and continues even to this day. These earliest Christian leaders whose belief and faith in God was demonstrated by the outward signs of devotion through prayer, provided the strength of conviction in a sense of righteousness conveyed into military victories. The terminology used in these militant prayers enabled those who had seen physical battle and waged the spiritual battle, to find common ground to continue the fight and provide an outlet for some of their aggressive nature in the name of God. While secular clergy and monks were often viewed traditionally as noncombatants, the use of prayer held a significant and powerful place in the arsenal of early Christians.



39 Kathleen M. Openshaw, "Weapons in the Daily Battle: Images of the Conquest of Evil in the Early Medieval Psalter." *The Art Bulletin* 75, no. 1 (1993), 37.

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