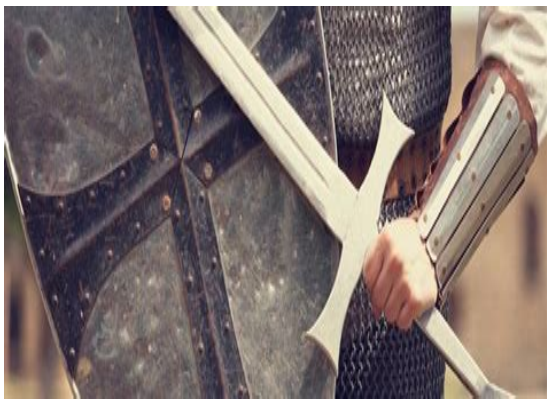


# *My First Legion*

A Vision of Anabaptist Destiny



John Stone



For King Jesus

*My First Legion*

by John Stone

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*“You shall love your neighbor as yourself.”<sup>1</sup>*  
*But wishing to justify himself, he said to Jesus,*  
*“And who is my neighbor?”<sup>2</sup>*

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<sup>1</sup> Matthew 22:39 NASB

<sup>2</sup> Luke 10:29 NASB

# *My First Legion*

A Vision of Anabaptist Destiny

## Introduction

The Anabaptists built their walls to keep the world out of them. Satan built the same walls to keep the Anabaptists out of the world. But God let the walls be built to keep a people to Himself for such a time as this.<sup>3</sup>



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<sup>3</sup> Esther 4:14

The Anabaptists' walls are coming down. Their inward focus, their 'us-and-them' mentality, their lack of Christ-like love for non-Anabaptists— these are the walls that wall them in.

When the Anabaptists walls come down and this storied people again love their neighbors as Christ loved them, then like their fearless fathers of old, this small but mighty people of God will once again turn the world upside down for Jesus.<sup>4</sup>

In a vision I was shown their victory.

## The Walls

In the vision, a stone wall encircled Anabaptist City. Inside the walled city dwelt the Amish, Mennonites and Hutterites. These three groups comprise the Anabaptists.

The stones that made the city walls had originally been white but had blackened with time. Chiseled into many of the blackened stones was a short Scripture that read like a motto or maxim. As I walked about the city, I noticed that some mottos appeared repeatedly while others were seen only once or twice.

Commonplace Scripture mottos included *“Submit to Authority,” “Be Holy,” “Be Useful,” “Obey the Law,” “Judgement Cometh,” “All Thy Needs Are Here Met,” “Wives, Submit to Your Husbands,” “Children Obey Your*

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<sup>4</sup> Acts 17:6

*Parents,*” *“All Things in Common,”* *“Do Not Be Worldly,”* *“God Sees Thy Sin,”* *“God Hates Divorce”* and *“Love Thy Neighbor.”*<sup>5</sup> The Ten Commandments were also prevalent.<sup>6</sup>

Like the time-blackened stones, many of these mottos had lost their original luster and some had taken on a menacing feel. When I read *“Fear God”* over a passageway within the city, the dark words cut into the darkened stone made the way forward fearful.<sup>7</sup>

As I studied this Biblical command to fear God, the admonition felt disconnected from the tender promises God gives to those who honor Him.<sup>8</sup> *“Fear God”* had been twisted by an unseen enemy to stir up ungodly fear among the citizens.

*“Do Not Be Deceived”* was another motto that the unseen enemy had disjointed from its original meaning in order to disturb the people. The warning against being deceived was chiseled into the wall next to an entrance to a narrow way. Standing there, I looked around for its companion motto which I knew to be, *“The Holy Spirit Will Lead You Into All Truth.”* I did not see it.

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<sup>5</sup> 1 Peter 2:13; 1 Peter 1:15-16; 2 Peter 1:8; 1 John 5:3; 1 Peter 4:5; Philippians 4:19; Ephesians 5:22; Colossians 3:20; Acts 2:44; Romans 12:2; Hebrews 4:13; Malachi 2:16; Matthew 22:39

<sup>6</sup> Exodus 20:2-17

<sup>7</sup> 1 Peter 2:17

<sup>8</sup> Psalm 103:13: *“The Lord is like a father to His children, tender and compassionate to those who fear Him”* (NLT).



Without the right counterbalance, the twisting of “*Do Not Be Deceived*” had become so effective at disturbing the people that some citizens now refused to study the Holy Scriptures for fear of being deceived by, of all things, God’s Word. Fear was so prevalent within the city walls that it felt like an atmospheric condition. Some citizens had become so oppressed by fear that they now attributed to the devil the powers of God that appeared in His people.<sup>9</sup>

Citizens who received a divine gift of healing or prophecy or tongues from the Lord Jesus Christ were often accused of having a demon.<sup>10</sup> Every citizen tricked by the twisting of “*Do Not Be Deceived*” was oppressed by a spirit of fear.

The dark mottos on the darkened stones reminded me a little of the Village of Morality in John Bunyan’s book, *Pilgrim’s Progress*.<sup>11</sup> The Village of Morality is a fictitious place where citizens ease their consciences by following rules and acting polite.

In corners of Anabaptist City, it felt as if the same spiritual coolness that afflicted Bunyan’s imaginary village had crept in to stay. Thankfully not all the mottos felt as cold as gargoyle stares.

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<sup>9</sup> Galatians 6:7; Mark 12:24-27

<sup>10</sup> 1 Corinthians 12:9, 30

<sup>11</sup> *The Pilgrim’s Progress from This World, to That Which Is to Come* is a 1678 Christian allegory written by John Bunyan. Bunyan wrote the book while imprisoned for holding religious services outside the control of the state church.

Occasional stones in the walls were scrubbed white. Mottos on whitened stones read like warm blessings. Wherever a whitened stone and motto appeared, a group of people gathered about to admire it. *“Be Joyful”* and *“Jesus, Friend of Sinners”* were two that I saw.

As I observed people studying whitened mottos, I imagined they felt as I did, that is, they felt encouraged by God to press on and not give up hope.<sup>12</sup>

Some areas in the city had more whitened mottos than others. A few neighborhoods had none, it seemed; and those areas were dark, so dark that it felt like some thick cloud permanently blocked the sun from shining in. The guards in these darker neighborhoods were easily agitated. From those oppressive places I walked away as quickly as my feet would carry me.

## The Guards

Most everywhere I walked there were guards. Some guards were stationed in gateways and some walked about like on patrol. The guards were on the lookout for spies.

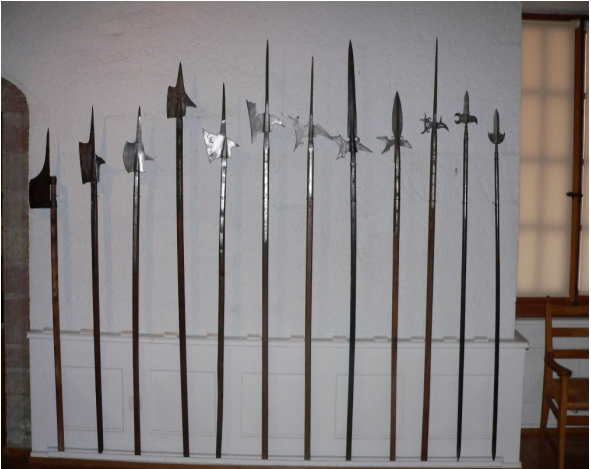
The guards were proud of their old-fashioned weapons which they mistakenly called swords, but the weapons they carried were clearly halberds and pikes. Most guards were near-sighted and lacked the strength to stop

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<sup>12</sup> Philipians 4:4 and Matthew 11:19

anybody determined to pass through a gateway. Real spies were rarely caught.

Because of their poor eyesight, the guards sometimes mistook a citizen for a spy. When the guards started eyeing an ordinary citizen with suspicion, the citizen could run for a passageway or they could wait and see what happened next. Anyone officially deemed a spy was escorted out of their neighborhood or town. Some so-called spies were expelled from the city entirely.



Halberds and Pikes

## Strangers on Earth

The longer I walked through Anabaptist City, the clearer it became that this could be a challenging place to live. Despite the daily grind, the people pressed on.

No matter how dark the neighborhood, I always found a number of citizens whose eyes sparkled and faces shone. The more I saw of Anabaptist City, the more I thought that these people must have a secret strength. How else could they press on and not give up hope? If they did have a secret strength then they must have a great purpose, I thought. God never wastes His strength on purposeless people.

Seeing so many walled-in people full of God's light and life made me wonder what their fearless fathers of old were like. I had read history books on the Anabaptists. Reading their histories and seeing the spiritual strength in these their offspring, it was easy to imagine how those brave Anabaptist men and women of long ago had turned the world upside down for the Lord Jesus Christ. Spiritually speaking, the Anabaptists remain to this day a most fearsome warlike people.

A famous Bible passage came to mind as I pondered these things. This particular scripture seemed to describe both the fearless fathers of old and these their noble children.

*“... but having seen and welcomed them from a distance, and having confessed that they were strangers and exiles on the earth. For those who*

*say such things make it clear that they are seeking a country of their own. And indeed if they had been thinking of that country which they left, they would have had opportunity to return. But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God; for He has prepared a city for them.”<sup>13</sup>*

As I thought about this Biblical description of the heroes of the faith, I knew that the city God has prepared for the Anabaptists is not the walled city they now inhabit. Their coming city is the City of God, the New Jerusalem coming down out of heaven.<sup>14</sup> These sparkling-eyed children had also inherited a destiny and purpose from their fearless fathers, and at the end of the vision, I would see it.

### The Amish Gentleman

In the vision as I toured Anabaptist City, I walked upon a group admiring the whitened motto, *“Love Never Fails.”*<sup>15</sup> At the back of this group stood a certain Amish man.

The Amish man wore a straw hat, light blue shirt and dark blue pants with black suspenders. His white beard seemed to touch the top of his pants. He stood erect and was imperially thin.

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<sup>13</sup> Hebrews 11:13-16 NASB

<sup>14</sup> Revelation 21:2

<sup>15</sup> 1 Corinthians 13:8

The Amish gentleman smiled at me, which was unusual. Most citizens either could not see me or pretended not to see me; I did not know which. Since I did not want to upset anyone, I had avoided speaking before now. But this tall elderly man was different. He looked right at me.

His smile seemed to invite conversation so not knowing what else to say, I asked him if he would explain to me the Scripture mottos seen across the city.

The grandfather started by saying that when he was young there had been many more whitened mottos than now. He explained that a number of mottos had been intentionally covered up and then mostly forgotten with time.

“What were the forgotten mottos?” I asked him.

“*‘Do Not Fear Them,’* was one,” he quietly replied.<sup>16</sup>

He said, “My great uncle used to stop and look at that motto every day on his way home from his shop. One day I heard him say to my aunt that if that motto was true and we didn’t need to fear the English then we did not need the walls.”

“Were there other mottos covered over?” I asked, wanting to continue the conversation.

The grandfather paused and then with a distant look said, “*Everyone Born of God Overcomes the World.*” Then he paused before adding, “*I Am Sending You Into the*

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<sup>16</sup> Matthew 10:26

*World.*<sup>17</sup> The grandfather seemed lost in thought. After a moment his blue eyes reconnected with mine.

He said, “I know our leaders tried to find good answers for the questions these difficult mottos caused but their answers never satisfied the people’s hearts. A few of our men were so concerned about the meaning of some of these mottos that they packed up their families and left in search of answers. Those who left us never came back. I do not know if they found the answers or not.”

“My uncle was one of those who left,” the grandfather added with courage.

“After our leaders told him that ‘*Go Into All the World and Preach the Gospel to All Creation*’ was not a motto for our time, the guards decided he was a spy and took him and my aunt out of the city. I do not know where they went.”<sup>18</sup>

As the old man said this, he turned away. He seemed sad. Our conversation was over. I continued walking.

## I Have Chosen You

Looking up at the height of the walls, I saw storm clouds swirling over the city. The dark churning clouds looked to be a constant fixture. I paused to study them. Although the clouds went round and round above the city, beams

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<sup>17</sup> 1 John 5:4; John 17:18

<sup>18</sup> Mark 16:15

of sunlight kept breaking through the clouds in different places and shining into the city.

Suddenly a beam of sunlight fell on me. Its brightness and warmth made me feel like God was smiling on me. As I felt this amazing sensation of love, I realized that these sunbeams were always falling on people all over the city, making them feel like I felt—blessed, favored by God and eternally loved.

Later that day I happened to be nearby when a sunbeam struck a whitened stone and lit up its whitened motto. The motto read, *“I Have Chosen You.”*<sup>19</sup> The sight was a marvel that created no small stir. A crowd quickly gathered to read and re-read the blazing motto. As I walked away, I heard the crowd’s excited chattering for some distance.

## A House Divided

Interior stone walls separated the city into three towns. I discovered that the Mennonites, Amish and Hutterites each had their own town within the great city. More walls sub-divided the towns into neighborhoods. Scattered throughout the neighborhoods stood stone houses. Each stone house was surrounded by a low stone wall. The houses represented churches. The interior walls that crisscrossed the city kept the city divided against itself.

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<sup>19</sup> Haggai 2:23



These internal divisions were the work of the unseen enemy.

The unseen enemy knew that the Lord Jesus Christ had decreed, *“Every City or House Divided Against Itself Shall Not Stand.”*<sup>20</sup> I had seen this motto carved into a number of darkened stones but noticed that it was usually read by citizens as if the truth applied only to a neighborhood or house; citizens rarely considered that this Scripture applied to all God’s people and on another level, to all the Anabaptists, just as much as it applied to churches and families.

Because of the many interior walls, few citizens traveled between neighborhoods, fewer traveled between towns, and even fewer headed for the outside world. This extreme lack of movement meant that groups of people inside the city could become so isolated that they could be tricked by the unseen enemy into thinking that they were the only Christians left on earth. The unseen enemy employed deep fear and a strong religious spirit to keep these people deceived.

Those who fell under this deception became like prisoners kept in the inner prison.<sup>21</sup> It had been wiped from their memory that the Lord Jesus Christ had said, *“I Have Other Sheep Not of This Sheepfold.”*<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Matthew 12:25

<sup>21</sup> Acts 16:24

<sup>22</sup> John 10:16

## Gateways

Walking about I noticed that every interior wall had at least one gateway. Smaller gateways led into and out of the yards surrounding the houses that represented churches. Larger gateways led from one neighborhood or town into another. A few sallyports led out through the main city wall and into the world.



Sallyport

Above one sallyport I read, *“Do Not Love The World.”*<sup>23</sup> Those dark words cut deeply into the time-darkened stones brought to mind its companion motto, *“For God So Loved the World.”*<sup>24</sup> Surely the fearless fathers of old must have esteemed this companion motto, I thought, else they never would have taken the gospel message across Europe so quickly and with such boldness.

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<sup>23</sup> 1 John 2:15

<sup>24</sup> John 3:16

500 years ago the Anabaptists turned the world upside down through their godly love for worldly people. I wondered if that seminal motto had been covered up along with the other hidden mottos the Amish grandfather told me about. Why else would these precious people of God generally care so little for souls both lost and saved who lived beyond their city walls?

Most citizens were afraid to pass through any gateway. When someone did walk through a gateway, a cry of alarm sounded and people with worried looks, scurried to learn who went out. The unseen enemy had become so effective at scaring the people from meeting with other citizens from other places even within the city, that it was difficult for most citizens to imagine that someone would choose to leave their original home. Citizens often thought that those who left were lost to the enemy. Whenever someone tried to return through a gateway, they were viewed by the guards as probable spies.

### The Secret Treaty

As I continued my short walkabout Anabaptist City, I realized that it had been a long time since the city fathers had wholeheartedly sent their children into the world in the same way that God had sent His Son.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> In 1871 Heinrich Dirks was the first missionary sent by the Amsterdam Mennonite Missionary Society; Dirks went to Sumatra. North American Mennonites have missionaries in Africa, Asia, Central and South America and the Caribbean.

As I thought this over, I realized that there must be a reason why the Anabaptist leaders generally kept the good news of Jesus Christ locked inside their city walls. Or if when some bold citizens did venture out to make converts, there must be a reason why they always made the converts return with them into their prison-like city. The reason, I learned in history books, was as insidious as it was subtle.<sup>26</sup> Here's what I learned.

Following the Thirty Years War (1618-1648), the political rulers' negative view of the Anabaptists changed due to economic pressures. The lengthy European war had depopulated large areas of valuable farmland and the authorities were eager to get those farms productive again.

The Anabaptists, being pacifists, had escaped much of the fighting. This meant that their men were alive. Also the Anabaptists had a reputation as honest yeomen and skilled farmers. Because of these facts, the same political rulers who had been persecuting the Anabaptists soon began making them offers of worldly prosperity.<sup>27</sup>

The main catch to receiving worldly prosperity was that the Anabaptists had to agree to quit sharing the Good

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<sup>26</sup> *Pentecost to The Present, Book Two*; Oliver; *The Mennonite Immigration to Penn. in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century*, Smith; etc.

<sup>27</sup> In 1642 the king of Poland pronounced an edict favoring Mennonites. In 1664 an edict of Mennonite toleration was issued in the Palatinate region of Germany. In the late-1600s similar agreements were issued in Alsace, France.

News of the Lord Jesus Christ with lost souls.<sup>28</sup> To obtain worldly wealth, the Anabaptists fathers had to stop loving their neighbors as Christ loved them.

Many Anabaptist leaders accepted the offer. In exchange for good farms and an end to persecution, a large number of Anabaptist fathers promised to quit loving their neighbors as Christ loved them.<sup>29</sup> Since the devil could not stop the Anabaptists through persecution, he bought their silence with worldly treasure. This is historical fact.

Today God continues calling the Anabaptists to repent for making this spiritual treaty with the enemy. God is calling His precious people to repent on behalf of themselves, their fathers and their fathers' fathers all the way back to those who originally made the wicked agreements. Repentance is as simple as a heartfelt prayer asking the Lord Jesus first for forgiveness and second, for renewed love for neighbors.

The enemy knows the God-given destiny of the Anabaptists is to once again turn the world upside down for Jesus Christ. Because of this, the unseen enemy wants the Anabaptists dead. Until he can kill them, he will settle for their silence. But God has other plans for this small but fearless people of His, and in the vision I would soon see it.

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<sup>28</sup> Other catches included not building church houses, not gathering together to worship in crowds of more than 20 adults, not learning trades, and not living inside cities.

<sup>29</sup> "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another" (John 13:34).

In the vision I knew that through the years successive Anabaptist leaders were warned about the enemy's true plans, but the leaders either trusted in their walls to save them from the enemy or they refused to believe the warnings or they hoped the coming war with the enemy would delay until after they passed from this life to the next.

As I looked deeper into the vision, I saw God's master plan to deliver His precious people from their ungodly treaty before calamity struck. God's plan included dynamiters.

### The Dynamiters

In the vision, I watched a number of men busily tunneling beneath the dark wall from outside Anabaptist City. Guards never patrolled outside the walls so none inside knew this was happening. The tunneling men were dynamiters.

The dynamiters were intent on blowing up the wall that hemmed their brethren in. Most dynamiters had at some point in time been thrown out of the city as spies because they asked too many questions about Scripture mottos. Once turned outside the walls, these men had searched until they found answers to their questions. When their hearts were full of good answers, they became dynamiters.

The dynamiters packed explosives into the many tunnels they dug under the great wall. Each dynamiter had decided in his heart that he would either blow up the wall or go to heaven trying. The dynamiters worked like ants.<sup>30</sup>

The dynamiters had their own favorite mottos. One of their mottos was, *“Let My People Go!”*<sup>31</sup> Another was, *“For Freedom Christ Has Set Us Free!”*<sup>32</sup> The dynamiters often sang while they worked. They were joyful.

A small number of dynamiters were busy tunneling under the wall from inside the city. These inside dynamiters could have easily walked past the guards and left Anabaptist City but they had decided they could work better from inside the city than from the outside. They loved their people and did not want to abandon them. The inside dynamiters were careful to live in such a way that the guards rarely marked them as spies.

I watched as an inside dynamiter met a dynamiter tunneling from outside the city. The two men met deep beneath the foundation of the great wall. It was comical to see their mutual surprise when their tunnels collided.

As the two met, the outside dynamiter asked the inside dynamiter, “What are you doing here?”

The inside dynamiter replied, “I am going to blow up this wall. What are you doing here?”

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<sup>30</sup> Proverbs 6:6

<sup>31</sup> Exodus 5:1

<sup>32</sup> Galatians 5:1

“I am going to blow up the wall, too. I am going to blow it sky high,” replied the outside dynamiter, “Let’s work together.”

The two dynamiters grinned, shook hands and went back to work packing explosives deep under the wall’s foundation, each man backing out the way he came in.

## Dynamite Power

In Acts 1:8 Jesus tells his disciples that they must first receive the *dynamis* or the ‘dynamite power’ of the Holy Spirit before they can be His witnesses. The dynamiters had this Holy Spirit power, and their battle plan was an old one.

Their plan grew out of Acts 16:26: *“And suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken. And immediately all the doors were opened, and everyone’s bonds were unfastened.”*

The dynamiters had the power of God to blow up the walls and set the prisoners free.<sup>33</sup> They were determined to do it.

After watching the two dynamiters meet deep in their tunnel, I found myself standing on a hill overlooking the plain where Anabaptist City stood. The dynamiters had finished the job. Fuses stuck up from the ground every ten to twenty feet around the entire city wall. The wall was

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<sup>33</sup> 2 Timothy 1:7



totally mined. The fuses, ready to light, were now the only thing to be seen of the dynamiters' diligence.

Now the dynamiters waited for God to do His part of the job which was to light the fuses. God's fire would ignite the fuses that would set off the explosives that would blow the wall sky high. It was only a matter of time before the walls blew apart, and the dynamiters knew it, and they were excited.

While the dynamiters waited for the explosion that would surely come, they put their *dynamis* power to good use. Some walked undetected into the city and worked quietly among the people. A few set off on missions to other places. The remainder started helping the campers.

## The Campers

From my position on the hill, I could see small groups encamped outside the dark walls of the city. The people in these many camps, in ones and twos, had braved the walls and guards, and like the dynamiters before them, they escaped the city.

The campers had no clear idea of where to go or what to do after escaping so they pitched camp outside the walls of their old city. Each little group of campers huddled around its own campfire, cooking, warming themselves, talking quietly and waiting. Waiting for what, they did not know.

Every camper had friends and family within the city, and while the campers had no desire to return to life inside the oppressive walls, they did not feel comfortable venturing too far from the city, either. They did not want to abandon their brethren. They loved their people even if they were locked away inside the dark city walls. So they camped.

Bands of roaming enemy raiders occasionally caught an unwary camper. The raiders would pretend to be friendly in order to lure the unsuspecting camper away from the safety of his fireside. Once away from the fire, the raiders would bind the unwary camper in chains. Like the patriarch Joseph, those Anabaptists taken captive were sold into slavery by the raiders. I was not shown what became of those who were sold into slavery.

None of the many campers realized that the city walls were about to blow sky high. They did not understand that their brethren would soon be set free. The campers had no idea that they would shortly be called into the spiritual military service that the ungodly 'peace' agreement had kept them from.

Almost all the people in the city as well as those encamped roundabout were about to pick up where their fearless fathers of old had left off in the mid 1600's. Spiritually speaking, the Anabaptists were about to come out from behind their walls, form army ranks and march once more to war. From my hilltop position, this is what I saw next.

## Seven Riders

Seven riders on seven horses stood on the plain below the hill I was on. Beyond the seven riders were the campers, and beyond the campers rose the dark walls of Anabaptist City.

Neither the campers nor most dynamiters could see the riders but the riders saw them. The riders saw everything. They observed the dynamiters' diligent tunneling and packing of explosives. They noted the fuses. They observed the campers and their humble campfires. The riders witnessed it all.

The seven riders knew the fearless fathers of old. They knew about the so-called peace treaty that had been made with the enemy, and they were aware of the enemy's coming double-cross. They knew about the building of the walls, how Satan had walled them in to keep them out of the world, and importantly, the riders knew the destiny of this small but noble people of God. The riders had come to martial the Anabaptists to war. The riders had come for such a time as this.

The riders were military men. One of them was the Captain. The other six riders were His lieutenants. The Captain's eyes flamed with fire.<sup>34</sup>

Satisfied with all that He saw, knowing that the time was right, the Captain turned to one of His lieutenants and gave the command, "Light the fires."

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<sup>34</sup> Revelation 1:14

The lieutenant carried a flaming torch for this very purpose. Off the man galloped.<sup>35</sup>

Around the city walls the rider rode, holding his torch near to the ground and setting aflame every fuse that the dynamiters had carefully installed. Soon the rider completed his circuit and galloped back to his place near the Captain. The Captain and His lieutenants looked at Anabaptist City one last time. Then the prison-like walls blew sky high.

## The Ruins

The explosion was so fierce that it blew away the storm clouds. With the clouds gone, the sun shone brightly across the grounds where Anabaptist City had stood for three-and-a-half centuries.

There was nothing left of the old city but rubble. Everything had blown up. The great outer wall, the divisive inner walls, the carved mottos, the stone houses, the pavements, everything. Anabaptist City was gone. Not one rock remained in its entirety, only pebbles and dust, a total ruin.

Amazingly not one soul was injured in the explosion. Even those caught up in the rising shock wave fell back into the rubble unharmed. While none of the million or so souls in the city were injured, almost all were dazed.

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<sup>35</sup> Hebrews 1:7

People sat covered in dust, wiping their faces and clothes. Some lay in and under the rubble. A few stumbled about in shock. The campers looked on in wonder. The dynamiters both inside and outside the city began dancing for joy even before the dust cloud settled.

As the dust cloud subsided, the outside dynamiters walked straight into the rubble to help their brethren. The inside dynamiters were already at work. As the dynamiters helped the people, they joyfully shouted mottos like, *“Come Out of Her My People,”* and *“Arise and Shine, for Your Light Has Come,”*<sup>36</sup>

Most of the campers rushed in behind the dynamiters to help, too. The dynamiters and campers assisted those who would receive their help. They led out of the rubble those who would come out.

Some people refused to come out. Some just lay in the ruins unwilling to stand up, their fists tightly squeezing handfuls of rubble. Tears made channels through the dust on their faces as they bemoaned the loss of their city and its walls. They would not repent of their prisoner mentality. They refused to accept their newfound freedom. They rejected the day of their redemption.

The dynamiters and campers were heartbroken to see some of their brethren cling to the dust but only so much time could be spent trying to coax them out. The army was forming.

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<sup>36</sup> Revelation 18:4; Isaiah 60:1

## Soldiers at Heart

From my hilltop position I saw the Captain's lieutenants dismount and walk among the gathering people. Those who did not have proper armor received what they needed. Those who had carried halberds and pikes had left those ungodly weapons in the rubble when the sweeping sunshine revealed to their eyes the truth of what they held in their hands.

In the bright sun, everyone's eyesight became instantly better. The closer the people gathered together, the taller and stronger they stood.

The lieutenants put the gathered people into military order. The lieutenants assigned military rank to each person, including the women and children. Some of the newly minted leaders had never been recognized as leaders before. The opposite was also true. Some who had been leaders inside the walled city were now private soldiers. Leaders were appointed by their spiritual gifts and maturity, not by their physical age or appearance.<sup>37</sup>

The lieutenants taught the leaders military doctrine, how to form ranks, march and fight. The leaders in turn, explained all that they learned to their soldiers. Everyone learned the enemy's strategy, his devious tactics and the dire situation facing the world. Everyone tested his armor and weapons. Each soldier's armor shown brightly in the sun.

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<sup>37</sup> 1 Samuel 16:1-13

While the army continued forming, fast-moving military scouts from some other people group came and went from the area. The scouts kept the Captain and His lieutenants informed of the enemy's advance. The scouts brought news that the enemy army tasked with overrunning the Anabaptists was still located over the horizon but it was steadily advancing more or less towards them. The enemy planned a surprise attack on the city, but the Captain had other plans.

The Captain's lieutenants explained to the gathered soldiers that the enemy was marching towards them. The lieutenants explained that there were captives among the enemy army that needed to be set free. The more training the Anabaptist soldiers received, the more their love for the captives grew and the more they hated evil in every form. The people learned fast. The Anabaptists have always been soldiers at heart.

## Awards

When the army was almost ready to march, an award ceremony took place. In the hearing of all, the Captain presented each dynamiter with a military award that began with the phrase, "*Well Done My Good and Faithful Servant.*"<sup>38</sup> As each dynamiter received his medal for conspicuous valor, the people cheered. After the awards ceremony, the dynamiters received new military orders.

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<sup>38</sup> Luke 19:17

Those dynamiters not sent on special assignment by the Captain, assumed the foremost leadership positions in the new army. Leaders also came from among the campers for they had proven themselves courageous under fire and devoted to their fellow soldiers.

When all necessary military positions were assigned, every soldier knew that every other soldier had received the proper rank. The lower ranking people were thankful to have the leaders they were given, and the leaders were pleased with the soldiers they led.

As I looked on, I felt that the military force, professionalism and *esprit de corps* of this company of soldiers had to surpass any grand army the world had ever seen. Their unity and resolve were unparalleled. As I looked at them in wonder, I thought that the church in the Book of Acts was only a starting point for this people.

“What God has done here,” I said to myself, “no hellish power can stop. This people will surely prevail.”<sup>39</sup>

As I continued looking at what God’s redemptive power had so quickly accomplished, I remembered that it was said at the wedding at Cana that the Bridegroom kept his best wine until last.<sup>40</sup> That paradigm could never have been truer than now, I thought.

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<sup>39</sup> What the author saw and heard in the vision brings to his mind some of Rick Joyner’s writings.

<sup>40</sup> John 2:10



## My First Legion

When the people were ready to march into battle, the Captain rode forward and presented His little army with a large battle flag that He had designed Himself. The battle flag was a dark red banner with gold trim. The flag pictured a small white lamb imposed on a large golden lion. Embroidered in gold above the lion and the lamb were the words, "My First Legion."

When the Captain presented the banner to His newly formed army, He said to them, "You are My First Legion."

I looked on in wonder, knowing that the First Legion would go down in the annals of kingdom military history as the first of the Lord's armies to fight in the war to end all wars. There would be more legions to come, I knew, but the First Legion was marching to war.

## The Battle

With the city ruins behind them, the First Legion marched straight ahead to battle. As one man, the First Legion marched forward, their silver armor brightly reflecting the sun. As I watched them march into the distance, I thought this must be what the Old Testament prophet Joel saw and wrote about.

When the First Legion neared the horizon of my sight, beyond them a dust cloud rose up high into the sky. The dusty brown cloud had a head with horns. Out from the sides of the cloud, two great arms with claws reached

around the little army. The demonic cloud looked intent on swallowing the First Legion whole. There was no hesitation on the part of the Lord's soldiers. Into the jaws of death marched His First Legion.

Beneath the evil cloud, I knew, was an angry mob that vastly outnumbered the First Legion, maybe a thousand to one. The mob was filled with people with disfigured faces, grotesque bodies and unsightly wounds. Among their weapons were derision, false accusation, lies, unrighteous anger, jealousy, pride of life, lust and perversions of every kind.

One group within the evil horde had been so deceived as to think they were doing the Lord's work by fighting God's people. What I saw under the demonic cloud made me think of Rick Joyner's vision of the great spiritual battle recorded in his short book, *The Final Quest*.

As the First Legion marched headlong into the teeth of this grotesque army, as the demonic cloud seemed to swallow them whole, from the distance I heard the soldiers encouraging one another with different mottos. At intervals I heard them shout, "*Stand Firm,*" "*Do Not Fear,*" "*Do Your Duty,*" "*Remember Your Training,*" "*Trust Jesus,*" "*Walk By the Spirit,*" "*Love One Another,*" "*We Have The Victory That Has Overcome the World,*" and among many other encouragements, "*Love Never Fails!*"<sup>41</sup> Then the evil cloud totally enveloped the little army and its soldiers disappeared from my view.

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<sup>41</sup> Ephesians 6:14; 1 Peter 3:14; Luke 17:10; Proverbs 22:6; Philippians 2:19; Galatians 5:16; John 13:34-35; 1 John 5:4; 1 Corinthians 13:8

Moments after they disappeared, I heard a war cry rumble up through the darkness that had swallowed them. The First Legion had shouted as one man, and from a great distance I heard their roar. In unison they cried, *“For Freedom Christ Has Set Us Free!”*<sup>42</sup> Those words were the last I heard of them. They had disappeared into darkness.

Seeing the dusty cloud thick over the battlefield and hearing nothing more, my heart sank. I wondered if the fearless little army had become a forlorn hope. I wondered if the First Legion had been swallowed alive by the mouth of hell. I kept watching the clouded battlefield, hoping.

I remembered the old Amish grandfather. He was in the thick of that battle now. I thought of the fearless women and brave-hearted children. Minutes passed like hours. No reports came in. Our scouts could not see into that darkness.

## Victorious

Suddenly the thick cloud dissipated and suddenly the sun shone brightly across the distant battlefield. From my hilltop position I saw the First Legion standing firm, their ranks unmoved, their armor glistening in the sunlight, their glorious banner fluttering in a breeze. Against an overwhelming enemy force, they had prevailed.

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<sup>42</sup> Galatians 5:1

“Truly,” I said to myself, “every two of them put ten thousand to flight.”<sup>43</sup> My heart soared with joy.

Couriers began bringing in after-action reports. From those reports I learned that almost all the soldiers had emerged from the battle unscathed, and all had grown much stronger. The enemy was retreating in disarray. Tens-of-thousands of prisoners had been freed. Those freed were being healed and trained on the spot to be soldiers. When their training was complete, the newly minted soldiers would form the core of the Second Legion.

Numerous battlefield reports noted extraordinary heroism and conspicuous acts of gallantry from all ranks. Many soldiers including a large number of women and children eventually received awards from the Captain, awards every bit as notable as those given to the dynamiters. These fearless Anabaptist people, like their fathers of old, had overcome. They were victorious.

The final casualty report stated that the handful of soldiers killed and wounded in the battle all shared one thing in common. Upon inspection, each casualty was found to have hidden a little dark rock somewhere on his person. The report noted that those soldiers who became casualties had not completely left the walls of Anabaptist City behind.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> Deuteronomy 32:30

<sup>44</sup> Philippians 3:13-14

In the battles the First Legion was still to fight, none of its soldiers ever made that mistake again.

*Praise be to the Lord my Rock,  
who trains my hands for war,  
my fingers for battle.<sup>45</sup>*

*Amen.*

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<sup>45</sup> Psalm 144:1 NIV





Dirk Willems, 1569

Prayer: Lord Jesus, I repent for not loving my non-Anabaptist neighbors as you have loved me. On behalf of my fathers and my fathers' fathers, I repent for trusting in walls to keep the world out instead of trusting in Your Power in us to overcome the world. Thank you for the Blood that washes away all our sins. From this day forward create in us a clean heart, O Lord, and train our hands for spiritual war. Amen.

