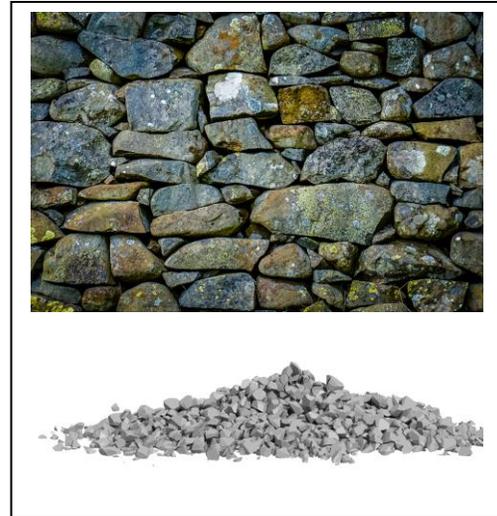


## **Able to Keep Rank**

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*Of Zebulun, such as went forth to battle, expert in war, with all instruments of war, fifty thousand, which **could keep rank**: they were not of double heart.*

1 Chron 12:33 KJV

An interesting phrase caught my eye: **Men who could keep rank**. I saw that it is used in many places. Various commentators confirmed my first concept: that it meant being able to hold your position; in rows or columns. In a military parade or a marching band, it is easy to see how important keeping in one's place is in order to create the various patterns of movement without colliding with others. But there were other related translations or concepts such as "being able to set in battle array," "to remain faithful and loyal" and "to be of a single mind or not double minded." At one point I saw that David and Joab simply setting their warriors in "battle array" was enough to send the enemy packing in fear without ever engaging!

If **keeping rank** is only so that a performance can be beautifully executed it requires a great deal of concentration. In a battle, keeping one's position is a matter of life and death. Men who are able to **keep rank** have been well trained and are disciplined. Working together under the direction of a leader who is viewing the whole scene empowers them all. It involves the sense of loyalty and faithfulness toward a shared leader or outcome, and loyalty and confidence in one another. They know how to fight individually but they also know that 50 men working together can accomplish more than 500 working independently. When they hold their place, they are multiplying their effectiveness, also providing flanking cover for those around them. One can concentrate on moving ahead through the oncoming onslaught.

This training involves mental toughness to not turn and flee when the going gets tough. Perseverance! It also involves not rushing ahead on the strength of one's own merits. In doing so, one would outpace the companions and leave them all spaced too thinly to stand, endangering all. In Wisconsin, I suppose we would call it team spirit; allowing the coach to set up the play, not looking to be a star but doing your part in the overall plan. Otherwise it would be a **busted play** per Wikipedia football glossary: *A play which deteriorates to the point that it no longer conforms with the coach's playbook and leads to confusion or chaos on the field.*

Messiah and His followers have often represented the life of faith as one of being in battle. It may or may not be a physical battle but it is always a spiritual one that involves our mind, will and emotions.

*Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil.*

Ephesians 6:11

*Therefore, prepare your minds for action, keep sober in spirit,  
fix your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.*

1 Peter 1:13

*Through You we will push back our adversaries;  
Through Your name we will trample down those who rise up against us.*

Psalms 44:5

If Believers have heard of the life of faith as being like a battle, they most often only think of it in spiritual terms and in individual terms, not considering the importance of working together. As a result, too often, we have busted plays that lead to chaos and confusion among us. Conversely, we have stars who move ahead under their own agenda, leaving the wellbeing of family and faith community behind. To me, this equates to leaders/teachers who seek fame and a wider audience and abandon their local group. It also equates to those who rely heavily on teaching the word, or knowledge alone, while ignoring the importance of shepherding which involves “iron sharpening iron” and the work of developing a scripturally strong community, and maturity and strong character among their people.

*Hear, my son, your father's instruction,*

*And do not forsake your mother's teaching;*

*Indeed, they are a graceful wreath to your head And ornaments about your neck.*

Proverbs 1:8-9

This is far more than a passing thought: the wreath to your head and ornaments on your neck speak to the God honoring guidance given by both parents as functioning like a horse's bridle to direct your path. (See teaching on our website homepage on this: [Be Ye Set Apart PowerPoint](#)) Both knowledge of the Word (Father) and character development (Mother) are necessary to navigate well through life.

Knowledge of our God and His Word alone “puffs up” but in concert with the other attributes of discernment, wise counsel, power, intimacy and relational strength, it is like mortar and builds us up!

In my study of the attributes of the Bride of Messiah, I have found one analogy to be that of being a wall which is joined together in a defensive mode, as in encompassing a city. (See study series at: <http://www.set-apart-ministries.org/preparemessiahsbride.html>) Another is that of being as living stones:

*you also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood,  
to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.*

1 Peter 2:5

Living stones, joined together in walls, making up the spiritual house for a Kingdom of Priests (Ex. 19:6 and 1 Peter 2:9) You say you are not a priest? Well, the Word through Peter says you are! It is in “Performing the vow” or “waging the warfare” that we stand together and draw on His power and

authority to fight the good fight. Though it is popular to consider the full armor of God as that of a Roman soldier, a far more significant comparison is to the Priestly garments. (Check out Mark Biltz teaching- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E4AOe89h2XQ> ) A shield of flesh will fail...and any manmade armor alone will not stand in this kind of war.

Taken together, these concepts also speak to being able to keep rank. If individual believers disregard or even avoid the gathering together of those of like mind and heart, they are like 500 individual fighters working on their own. They may be living stones of faith, but they are scattered or perhaps just brought together in a pile. That pile is a far different thing from **a wall, which is made up of stones who have learned to keep rank** and who know their position and trust those beside them as well as those who lead. 50 stones set together in a wall accomplish far more than 500 in a pile!

Now all of these concepts are significant enough when considered in the context of building up the community of faith but they become even more significant when that community of faith faces the schemes of the devil in the world. The **Wisconsin Christian News Expo** this year is a case in point. The threats of those in opposition to the God honoring message escalated to threats of violence. I believe there were scattered stones and stones built into walls in response. Among the scattered stones were those who saw potential violence and fled, not trusting our God and perhaps also not knowing enough about the people they would stand with to trust them either. The living stones that have been built up into a wall attended, defending in prayer and by setting themselves in "battle array." All praise to our Messiah, no violence ensued and the teaching went out...and is still going out via internet!

A recent national example also comes to mind. In America, our ability to express our faith is protected in one way through the First Amendment for free speech. Most Christian advocates for free speech also appreciate the importance of being able to express our faith and values that uphold our constitution. The news has been full of the controversy of those who oppose the election of President Trump, who is seen as a "King Cyrus" type by many believers. They are also called "Anti-FA" protestors: FA refers to the First Amendment. In the 1960s, the University of California-Berkeley was called the "Birthplace of Free Speech" which was demanded through rioting. Now, it is the seat of "Anti-FA" riots because they do not want conservative views presented to the student body. In February, conservative speaker, Milo Yiannopoulos, was met with riots that cost the university \$100,000. In April, another conservative speaker was invited to speak, Ann Coulter. After great effort to keep the engagement, she cancelled her speech when the university said they couldn't guarantee her safety and her invitation was withdrawn. Others did attend that night anyway and Coulter's speech was read without major incident, though it is considered a symbolic death of freedom of speech on America's campuses, when that free speech involves conservative and/or Godly views.

What you may not know is that there was another Free Speech event held in Berkeley in April on the 15<sup>th</sup>; a Liberty Revival Alliance at MLK Jr. Park. Event organizers invited the Oathkeepers to attend and provide security in cooperation with the Berkeley police. The event was besieged by Anti-FA protestors but they took a look at the "battle array" of men who knew how to keep rank and were unable to stop or harm the speakers! Stewart Rhodes, Founder of Oathkeepers provided a report on what happened there which can be seen at their site, [www.oathkeepers.org](http://www.oathkeepers.org). They purposely do NOT look for a fight while providing security, but are prepared to defend if a fight comes to them.

While I cannot say that all who stood were Christian believers, it is clear that presenting Constitutional as well as Christian values was the shared goal of those who stood against the protesters. Rhodes provides an interview which includes the recognition that these protesters were ready to fight but not skilled or well-armed. Whether a battle is desired by Believers or not, it is clear that the fight is coming to us. He warned that the groups who have been anti-gun in the past are now ramping up their training to include use of guns and other weapons. This has also been seen in the **Organizing for Action** training for would-be protestors that has grown out of President Obama's former campaign action group.

**Fellow Believers: do you know how to keep rank? Though our desire is for peace, the desire of the evil one for this age is chaos.** That chaos includes violent opposition to free speech and especially Scriptural truth being freely presented. The physical battle is on campuses and city streets around America now. The spiritual battle is within the minds and hearts of our people. Does your faith walk include preparation to stand for what is right in the face of opposition? War on American soil has not been known for generations but it appears to be in our near future.

I have said many times that the main battle is behind our eyes and between our ears: we must make the prayerful determination to draw near to our God and walk after Him together if we are to hold our ground, spiritually, against the onslaught of evil, whether it be in the spiritual or physical realm. While we do not go out looking for a fight, are we able to set a battle array and be single minded in our desire to defend Messiah's truth? Sometimes that alone, will be enough to stem the tide.

Is your assembly training you up so that you will be built together as living stones into a royal priesthood, capable of standing against the tide of chaos? Do you have the mental toughness the Disciples had to continue preaching Messiah's Death and Resurrection in spite of persecution, jailing and beatings by the people and the government, and even the "church" of that time?

Yes, we know that these things must come on the earth before Messiah returns. Our part is to remain faithful to Him, individually and corporately. There is a time to remain peaceful and there is a time to resist tyranny. Our wisdom and discernment on this must come from Him, not our own flesh, so do not neglect either your Father's or your Mother's teaching! **Keep rank!**

***To discuss what it means to "keep rank" today, please contact us at [info@set-apart-ministries.org](mailto:info@set-apart-ministries.org) Or (920) 634-2760.***