



REVISED EDITION

THE

# Unseen REALITY

A PANORAMIC VIEW OF  
SPIRITUAL WARFARE

DR. NABEEL T. JABBOUR

# **THE UNSEEN REALITY**

## **A PANORAMIC VIEW OF SPIRITUAL WARFARE**

**DR. NABEEL T. JABBOUR**

**To BARBARA**

MY WIFE, MY FRIEND AND PARTNER,  
WHO PRAYED FOR ME, MOTIVATED ME,  
CHALLENGED ME AND ENCOURAGED ME  
IN OUR LIFE JOURNEY TOGETHER  
TO SUBMIT TO GOD AND TO RESIST THE DEVIL.

JAMES 4:7

The original version of this book was published by Navpress Singapore. Copyright 1995.

Revised edition in digital format was published in 2019.

No part of this publication may be reproduced in any form without written permission of Dr. Nabeel Jabbour  
[nabeel@nabeeljabbour.com](mailto:nabeel@nabeeljabbour.com)

Unless otherwise identified, all Scripture quotations are from the Holy Bible New International Version (NIV)  
Scripture quotes in Appendix A in Mark Bates' article are from English Standard Version (ESV)

Cover photo: [stock.com/dmitriyburlakov](https://www.stock.com/dmitriyburlakov)”

Cover design: Steve Learned: ZignGuy, LLC

## CONTENTS

Acknowledgments	6
Endorsements	<a href="#">7</a>
Chapter 1    Introductory Remarks	<a href="#">9</a>
Chapter 2    Approaching the Subject	<a href="#">11</a>
Chapter 3    The Defeated Enemy	<a href="#">17</a>
Chapter 4    Demonization	<a href="#">20</a>
Chapter 5    Satanic Influence in Cultures	<a href="#">30</a>
Chapter 6    Satanic Influence in Laws and Basic Beliefs	<a href="#">34</a>
Chapter 7    Satanic Influence through Structures of Power	<a href="#">39</a>
Chapter 8    Satanic Influence though Thought Life	<a href="#">47</a>
Chapter 9    How the Devil waged war against Jesus	<a href="#">57</a>
Chapter 10   Conclusion	<a href="#">61</a>
Appendix A   Courage in the Unseen Battle, Daniel 10	<a href="#">63</a>
Appendix B   A Bible study on spiritual warfare	<a href="#">71</a>
Books and Blogs by the Author	<a href="#">75</a>

## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

I am grateful to the Lord for what he has taught me through the years, especially in the years we spent in Egypt from 1975 to 1990 about the unseen reality of spiritual warfare.

My thanks are due to several people who read my manuscript and gave their expert evaluation and valuable suggestions. I am also grateful to those who edited the manuscript.

May God use this book to motivate the readers to go to the Scriptures and study this subject and arrive at their own conclusions. My prayer for you, the readers, is that daily, you will submit to God and resist the Devil (James 4:7).

## **TWO ENDORSEMENTS:**

### **ONE BY A CHARISMATIC LEADER AND THE OTHER BY A PRESBYTERIAN PASTOR**

#### **FIRST ENDORSEMENT**

As a believer of charismatic persuasion and experience, ordinarily I would not go to the writings of a teacher from a different stream to gain further insight on spiritual warfare. Author Nabeel Jabbour is the exception. In an era when God is highlighting the critical season we are in to reach the ends of the earth with the gospel, it is imperative we understand both our authority in Christ and our opposition while not offering undue attention to Satan. In *The Unseen Realty A Panoramic View of Spiritual Warfare*, Nabeel tackles a taboo subject while maintaining a very Christ centered framework.

Theology portraying our enemy as a de-fanged defeated foe relegated to a back room of irrelevancy loses the importance of Peter's admonition to watch for a vicious impactful foe who actively seeks to devour mankind (1 Peter 5:8). Demonization and satanic influence in one's thought life are well known concepts in charismatic circles. But where Nabeel offers additional and greater insight is in his discussion of satanic influence through laws, legislation, beliefs and structures of power. He rightly concludes believers should be on the offensive daring to be the conscience of our nations in our own spheres of influence, courageously challenging the evil structures of power, in Jesus' Name.

Melanie Boudreau  
Advisor/Team Director/Intercessor  
Apostolic Intercessors Network

#### **SECOND ENDORSEMENT**

Every follower of Jesus is involved in an invisible war against the spiritual forces of Satan. But while some believers seem oblivious to the reality of spiritual warfare, others seem to be wholly consumed by it and overly preoccupied with the evil one and his influence. In this newly revised edition of *The Unseen Reality: A Panoramic View of*

*Spiritual Warfare*, Dr. Nabeel Jabbour reminds us that the devil is indeed real and that he is incessantly at work to undermine every Christian, the Church, and our society around us. But Nabeel also reminds us that the only way to defeat Satan in our everyday lives is to keep our focus on Jesus Christ, the One who defeated the devil at the cross. This is the true strength of *The Unseen Reality*; rather than keeping our focus on the devil, who rages against Christians in the throes of his defeat, Nabeel's approach is centered on Christ and his victory on our behalf.

In reality, then, this book is about our sanctification. The Holy Spirit enables and equips us in our struggle against our sinful nature, a process that the devil seeks to retard and derail at every turn. But our victory is in Jesus, if we will but take hold of it. And Nabeel, in his clear and concise style, draws on his many years of spiritual battle on the front lines of missionary service to show us how we can recognize and overcome the work of the enemy in its many forms through Jesus Christ.

Now revised for a new generation, every believer will profit from reading *The Unseen Reality* and applying its insights. Warm and personally engaging, it is above all biblically sound and Christ-centered.

Rev. John Canales  
Christ Presbyterian Church (Flower Mound, Texas)  
Orthodox Presbyterian Church



## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

In the late 1980s, Frank Peretti's novel, *This Present Darkness*, along with its sequel and a few other books of similar nature, brought many evangelicals to a renewed awareness of and interest in the spirit world. Most of these books have to do with what is called "spiritual warfare."

As excitement in this subject continues, some will discard it as no more than a fad, and others will see that this phenomenon, which is being experienced around the world, should be taken seriously. When the dust settles, time will tell how big this phenomenon really is.

On the other hand, there are those in the Church who are hardly aware of the Devil and his emissaries. They think of him as a mere force or influence. They may be curious, but mere curiosity is not a sufficient response when the invitation is to the gymnasium for wrestling or to the battlefield for fighting. Christians must face the reality of the conflict. Escapism is not the solution. The battle is already on; and in this war, there will be no truce or cease-fire. Our understanding of spiritual warfare will make all the difference in the way we battle. This is what we will be dealing with in this book.

In 1961, I came to know Christ as my Lord and Savior. Two years later, I met The Navigators representative in Lebanon, and he trained me in the basics of the Christian life. For years in my university days, we witnessed to all types of students, whether nominal Christians or Muslims.

In 1968, I graduated from seminary and got my first regular job as a high school teacher. That first job provided me with a ministry of evangelizing and discipling young men in high school in Tripoli, north Lebanon. Those two years working in that high school were very fruitful. While I worked in this ministry, God was doing an important work in my life. I was literally gripped with Christ's statement, "Without me you can do nothing."

In 1970, I got married, and my wife and I lived in Beirut, Lebanon, where I worked as a teacher in a small university. In 1972, we became full-time staff with The Navigators and led a ministry among college students. In Lebanon, we were exposed to Catholics, Protestants and Muslims.

In 1975, our family moved to Cairo, Egypt, to pioneer and lead The Navigators work in that country. God led us in creative ways in the ministry because we were like blind people walking in a minefield. Yet his promise to us was that *he will lead the blind by ways they have not known* (Isaiah 42:16). That was assuring.

In September 1990, Egyptians assumed responsibility for the ministry, and we moved to the United States for a new commission in January 1991. During the fifteen years we were in Egypt, we worked extensively with the various religious strata of that society. We were heavily involved in counseling and were exposed to spiritual warfare in all its

dimensions. We saw God's authority and power very clearly, and we came to appreciate the safety of standing under Christ's umbrella and resting in the safety of his authority. On one of my teams, I had a man whose main ministry was exorcism. God has used him and is still using him.

Our exposure to spiritual warfare was not limited merely to demonization but to a much wider and broader battlefield. We came to see a panoramic view of spiritual warfare which includes:

- Demonization
- Satanic influence in Cultures
- Satanic influence in Laws and Basic Beliefs
- Satanic influence through Structures of Prayer
- Satanic influence through Thought Life.

In 1991, I read an excellent book by David Bosch on the history of missions. Again, I found myself exposed to this panoramic view of spiritual warfare in Church history, and not only in the realm of demonization.

In contrast, if we look at several books written by evangelicals on spiritual warfare, we find that most of them equate spiritual warfare almost exclusively with demonization and Satanic influence in cultures.

This book was originally published in 1995, a few years after we moved to America. It ran out of print and in 2019 in this digital format you have the revised edition. My goal in this book as I review it in 2019, is to present a concise overview of this subject which I have called *The Unseen Reality—A Panoramic View of Spiritual Warfare*. My desire is for us is to enjoy standing under Christ's protection and to fight from the standpoint of strength and victory. Christ's authority is our umbrella. Christ is already victorious. Ultimately, the war has already been won for us although some battles are still raging. The Devil is defeated although he continues to be a fierce fighter. May God use this book to increase our confidence in him and to motivate us to walk by faith and to put on the full armor of God.

## CHAPTER 2

### APPROACHING THE SUBJECT

When we listen to someone or read a book about spiritual warfare, how can we tell whether what is presented is Biblical and balanced? Just because it happened in Argentina or Indonesia, does that make it Biblical? What are the filters that should be included in our methodology as we attempt to develop a panoramic view of spiritual warfare?

#### 1. Christ-Centered Approach

In September 1990, I was given ten days to leave Egypt. This deadline gave me a tremendous appreciation for time. Every appointment was invaluable. As I prayed before and during every appointment, I found myself frequently saying to God, “Lord, I might never see this man again. What would you like me to talk with him about?”

Naturally, those ten days were loaded with demonstrations of God’s tender care, love, sovereignty, authority, wisdom and power. Towards the end of my days in Egypt, waiting in the lounge in the airport to depart, I was writing in my journal the evidences of his love, sovereignty and wisdom, when I found myself literally overwhelmed with God. Christ was so big before my eyes. He was in full control. He was awesome, and it was so easy to worship him. As I was sitting at the airport on my way out of Cairo and “counting my blessings,” an American missionary who was on the same flight came and sat next to me. Within half-an-hour, he must have referred to the Devil more than twenty times. “The Devil is at work these days. The Devil is this and the Devil is that . . .” In my case, I found myself talking about God’s love, kindness, authority, sovereignty, graciousness and compassion. I was “bursting at the seams” with God’s love. Suddenly, it dawned on me: It is wrong to have an anti-Satan-centered theology, but it is right to have a Christ-centered theology.

A good question to ask oneself is this, “When I am in the company of so-and-so, do I talk more about God, or Satan and demons? When I read this book or that book on spiritual warfare, what is my frame of reference: Christ and his authority or Satan and how we must fight him?”

In 1992, as I was reading a textbook on theology entitled *Sin*, written by G.C. Berkouwer, the author pointed out that evil could have a hypnotic effect. People who dwell on Satan as their frame of reference could lose sight of Christ and his authority. This is dangerous ground.

#### 2. Biblical Theology

A friend of mine once referred to a book on spiritual warfare that was saturated with verses from the Bible as “Biblical.”

We can easily make the false assumption that just because a manuscript is heavily documented from the Bible, that it is Biblical. This is not necessarily true.

A Jehovah's Witness could write a paper and document it heavily from Scripture, and it could still be un-Biblical. The important questions to ask are: "What assumptions does the manuscript make? Is the emphasis placed on one or two of the strands of evil, or do we see the rope as a whole, i.e., do we see only one way evil invades our lives or do we see evil in its totality?" Diminishing spiritual warfare to mere demonization is not Biblical. Others may focus their attention excessively on Satan and not on God. It is like *gazing* at Satan and merely *glancing* at God. Gazing at Satan and glancing at God is not Biblical either.

### **3. Importance of the Context**

This is a basic principle in any Bible study, yet we often violate it. At times, this violation does not create a danger, like using Revelation 3:20 in evangelism. However, at other times, it could cause serious theological errors.

Another dimension of this principle is the historical context. Scholars should not only consider the passage under study as a link in the chain but also consider its historical setting. Passages that deal with our enemy, Satan, should be considered in relationship to the incarnation of Christ, and especially his crucifixion and resurrection. The Devil, before and after these important historical events, must be viewed differently. So, we cannot quote Scripture out of its literal and historical contexts without the possibility of veering off onto a theological tangent.

### **4. Teaching Rather Than Narrative Passages**

Teaching or prescriptive passages are passages that contain very clear instructions; whereas, narrative or descriptive passages are passages that describe how people lived. As I study the Scriptures, I might come across a possible application in a narrative passage, but I will need to confirm whether this was taught clearly in the teaching passages or not. We often see in church history that heresies started with the error of basing doctrines on narrative passages rather than on teaching or prescriptive passages.

With wrong orientation, one can, for instance, prove that having personal property is sin. Christians should not individually own anything. Instead, they should live a communal lifestyle so that they will be one in heart and one in mind. After all, the Bible says, "*All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of his possessions was his own, but they shared everything they had*" (Acts 4:32).

With this approach, one can also twist the Scriptures to prove that it is wrong to get married because Jesus did not get married, and it is wrong to live life in one place because Jesus and Paul were mobile and so on.

Doctrine should be built on teaching passages rather than on narrative passages in Scripture.

## **5. New Testament Time is Unique**

When Paul was evangelizing the various cities in what we today call Turkey, Greece and finally in Rome, the New Testament was not yet canonized, and parts of it were not even written. Paul and Barnabas had a Bible composed of the Old Testament only. However, on their first journey, they had with them John Mark. John Mark was a member of the team not merely to serve Paul and Barnabas, but more importantly because he was able to memorize large portions of the sayings of Jesus. The Greek word “helper” which describes John Mark in Acts 13:5 is *huperete*, which not only means “servant” but also means “the attendant of the word of God.” (see Luke 4:20; Luke 1:2).

The few young men that accompanied the apostles were gifted with strong memories and were the carriers of the oral tradition that later became part of the New Testament.

But how can one trust that what these young men quoted was accurate? God confirmed the oral Scripture through signs and wonders.

Later, the New Testament was canonized; as a result, the signs and miracles that were intended to confirm the Scriptures were no longer needed. Therefore, it would be wrong for us to expect that we should have as many signs and miracles as Jesus and the apostles had. Expecting to reproduce the New Testament era in this century does not necessarily demonstrate great faith. It could instead be presumption on our part. However, it seems that God sometimes continues to confirm the Scriptures through signs and wonders to people who are on the frontiers of missions.

## **6. Pragmatism and Personal Experience are Not Reliable Proof**

Personal experiences can illustrate truth, but they are not the foundations of truth. Impressions received from personal experience can be highly deceptive. The impressions I derive from an experience should not be used as the basis of truth. Yet we see so many people using this argument to prove a point. Even missiologists at times fall into this error of citing stories from around the world and using them as the foundations of truth.

If a man prayed with great faith to a tree and asked that tree to heal his sick son, and it so happened that this son was healed, that does not make the tree a god. By the same token, I might see a young man who prayed to Jesus, then by faith walked on burning coals and did not get hurt. It would be dangerous for me to conclude that walking on burning coals is evidence of deep faith in Jesus Christ.

## **7. Proper Perspective on Suffering**

A proper perspective on suffering is another filter that we should have as we consider spiritual warfare. People who tend to see all suffering as a form of oppression by the Enemy will assume that healing and deliverance through exorcism are the main cures for most problems.

Yet in the Bible, we see that suffering could be the result of:

- Oppression: from people, governments, or spiritual forces. (John 15:18 - 19, Luke 21:31- 32).
- Reaping: the principle of sowing and reaping is universal. (Galatians 6:7 - 8).
- Cross-bearing: In following Jesus, believers often face persecutions. (Luke 9:23).
- Testing: trials and temptations are part of life's reality and God uses this testing to purify us and make us more and more like Jesus. (James 1:2 - 3).
- Chastisement: God disciplines us like good parents do, so that we will grow in holiness. (Hebrews 12:5 - 11).

Or it could be a combination of several factors. For some people, suffering is to be avoided, and deliverance from suffering is a proof of God's intervention. Yet James says, "*Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything*" (James 1:2 - 4). The whole book of Job deals with the issue of suffering and how it could produce maturity in the life of the believer.

Our suffering on this earth should be seen in the light of eternity. On this earth, we live as aliens and pilgrims, and suffering is and will always be a part of our life's experiences. We are called to follow in the footsteps of him who lived the cross principle and suffered for it (1 Peter 2:21-23).

The people of God, in the history of the church, suffered and were tormented with calamities and pain. Yet they set their eyes on the hope that awaited them. Paul puts it very clearly, "*For it has been granted to you on behalf of Christ not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for him*" (Philippians 1:29). God in his sovereignty could use even the oppression of the Devil to purify us in the crucible of fire to make us more and more like Jesus. If we assume that all suffering is a form of oppression, then the natural diagnosis would be the need for deliverance. Ignoring the other dimensions of suffering could result in *using God to solve our problems* instead of *using our problems to know God* more intimately.

## **8. Field Rather Than Blanket Perspective**

People's natural tendency is to feel safe in their familiar surroundings. Street signs and advertisements are written in a familiar language. People's clothes look right, and the way people relate seems to make sense. Once a person is removed from her familiar surroundings and is placed in a foreign culture, anxiety creeps in.

It is easy to draw the quick conclusion that Satan is not at work in my culture because I feel safe. On the other hand, when I do not feel safe in a foreign culture, I tend to arrive at the conclusion that the Devil is deeply at work in this foreign land. I call this the

“blanket perspective.” We tend to draw a white blanket over our culture because it feels safe, and we tend to draw a dark blanket over a foreign culture because we lose our sense of safety.

In contrast, Jesus presented another perspective which I call the “field perspective.” He told them another parable. *“The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field. But while everyone is sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat and went away. The servants asked (the owner), ‘Do you want us to go and pull (the weeds) up?’ ‘No,’ he answered, ‘because while you are pulling the weeds, you may root up the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest. At that time, I will tell the harvesters, ‘First collect the weeds and tie them in bundles to be burned; then gather the wheat and bring it into my barn’”* (Matthew 13:24 - 30).

It seems that God allows the weeds (Satanic influence) to grow among the wheat and wherever God is at work, the Devil is also at work. So, whether my culture feels safe or not, God is at work, and the Devil is at work. Whether I am in my familiar surroundings or visiting a foreign culture, I need to put on the whole armor of God. Irrespective of where I am, I need to be sensitive to how God is at work and how the Devil is at work.

Some cultures have more weeds than other cultures, yet in every place, God is at work, and the Devil is at work.

## **9. Truth Versus Power Encounter**

When Jesus came to Capernaum, *“So many gathered that there was no room left. Some men came, bringing to him a paralytic, carried by four of them. When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, ‘Son, your sins are forgiven.’ Now some teachers of the law were sitting there, thinking to themselves, ‘Why does this fellow talk like that? He’s blaspheming! Who can forgive sins but God alone? Immediately Jesus knew in his spirit that this was what they were thinking in their hearts, and he said to them, ‘Why are you thinking these things? Which is easier: to say to the paralytic, ‘Your sins are forgiven,’ or to say, ‘Get up, take your mat and walk?’” But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins.” He said to the paralytic, “I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home”* (Mark 2:1 - 11).

Which is easier, to forgive or to heal? For the teachers of the law, to forgive sins was easier than to heal because one could not know whether forgiveness had taken place. Furthermore, the paralytic’s urgent felt need was for healing rather than for forgiveness. But for Jesus, healing was easier than forgiving. Healing demanded some power but forgiving demanded his life on the cross.

In this incident, Jesus was teaching the crowds along with the disciples about the function and danger of signs and wonders. The function of the power encounter is to support, authenticate and serve the *truth encounter*. When the power encounter overshadows the truth encounter, then people will be fascinated, amazed, and distracted from the truth.

## 10. Proper Hermeneutics

There are entire books written about hermeneutics (interpreting the Bible), so what can we say in a short paragraph on this subject? How did Jesus deal with the subject of hermeneutics as he interacted with the Pharisees?

It seems that the Pharisees came to Jesus not to learn but to argue and to prove their point. Their minds were locked into their theories and systems, and they could not perceive that they were in the presence of the Messiah for whom they were looking and waiting. If they could have surrendered their preconceived ideas and their cemented conclusions, they would have seen God in their midst. No wonder Jesus told them, *“If anyone chooses to do God’s will, he will find out whether my teaching comes from God or whether I speak on my own”* (John 7:16 - 17).

It seems that Jesus was saying that the key to understanding the truth is being willing to come with an open and teachable mind. The ability to come with a broken spirit and with self-doubt about our cemented theories and dogmatism is the key to learning and understanding the truth.

When we come to the subject of spiritual warfare, we could easily come with closed minds and preconceived ideas. Are we willing to place these conclusions on the altar and read with an open mind?

The preceding paragraphs describe some of the filters that we should use to determine whether what we are studying is Biblical and well balanced as we attempt to study critical issues such as spiritual warfare.

In the next chapters, we will consider the various “strands in the rope” of spiritual warfare, but before we do so, we need to look at our enemy.



## CHAPTER 3

### THE DEFEATED ENEMY

The Devil has several names, and most of these names are attributes that describe him. Among these names are the Accuser, the Murderer, the Liar, the Deceiver, the Tempter and the Evil One. The two most important names are Satan and Devil. The word *Satan* which means the adversary appears thirty-three times in the New Testament, and the word *Devil*, which means the accuser or the slanderer, appears thirty-two times.

It would be extremely difficult to give an answer to the question of the origin of evil without getting into the heresy of dualism or attributing evil to God. What we can answer though is how evil started in history. The story of Lucifer, the Angel of Light, and how he rebelled against God, could be one possible theory (Isaiah 14:12).

#### Avoiding Extremes

Throughout history, people have tended to lean towards one of two extremes as they contemplated the Devil.

One group of people thought of him as a mere idea and not a real person. They claim that he is but a thought that comes to the mind and no more than a mere influence.

There are, on the other hand, others who have given to the Devil a prominent place in their thinking and awareness. For them, the Devil serves as a frame of reference and as important as God in their thinking. Rather than *gazing at God* and *glancing at the Devil*, they attempt to gaze at both. In actual practice at times, they tend to gaze at the Devil and glance at God.

I believe that the Devil is a real person and not merely an idea, an influence, or a force. He hates God and hates us, and he is highly motivated to destroy us. However, he is already defeated and will be destroyed on the Day of Judgment.

We need to make sure that we take our spiritual warfare very seriously because the Bible teaches in detail, and very plainly, that it is the intention of the Devil to use his demonic powers to keep man in a condition of spiritual darkness and alienation from God, resulting in hell.

The Devil's attributes describe him. He is the Evil One (Matthew 13:19), the Murderer (John 8:44), the Deceiver (Revelation 20:10), the Destroyer (Revelation 9:11); and the Tempter (Matthew 4:3). He conceals and twists the truth blinding the minds of people (2 Corinthians 4:3 - 4). He uses false teachers to deceive and confuse believers (1 Timothy 4:1 - 4). He oppresses people by using or causing diseases, both physical and emotional, to produce bitterness in man's heart against God, resulting in alienation.

The Devil's names shed more light on his powers and function. His names are Satan (Mark 4:1); the Devil (Luke 8:12); the Dragon, a symbol of strength and power (Revelation 12:17); the Serpent, a symbol of deception (Revelation 12:9); the Prince of

this World (John 12:31); the Ruler of the Kingdom of the Air (Ephesians 2:2); and the God of this Age (2 Corinthians 4:4).

### **But We Have Confidence**

The death and the resurrection of Christ was a cosmic event that was the culmination of Christ's ministry on earth where he confronted the Devil through his mighty acts of exorcism, healing the sick and raising the dead. These mighty acts were the anticipatory signs of the victory of the cross over the powers hostile to God. The cross was the turning point in history, for through the blood of Christ, the universe was reconciled with God (Colossians 1:20). Through the cross, Christ took away the power of death (Romans 8:38). His death was a victorious struggle against the demonic power of death which is often personified (Acts 2:24; Revelation 6:8). Death was the last enemy (1 Corinthians 15:26; Revelation 20:14) whose power was broken (2 Timothy 1:10). Since death is the consequence of sin, expiation for sin broke death's power at its roots. Once sin was overcome, death became like a lion who got mortally wounded.

In some of Paul's writings, death, which is the last enemy, may be synonymous with the Devil since death was his greatest weapon. The Lordship of Christ was declared in his resurrection (Philippians 2:11). This triumph was a decisive conquest over the principalities and powers, but their final subjection remains to be completed on the Day of Judgment.

To sum up, the Devil now is like a lion who is a *mortally wounded* adversary, roaring and seeking to devour us. He is a bloodthirsty enemy, but we know that our ultimate victory is sure. So, for us who put our faith in Christ, the Devil is like a lion who is mortally wounded. His greatest weapon has been crushed; and therefore, we have no fear of death.

Yet for the people outside of Christ's kingdom, the Devil is still a lion who is victorious and invincible. Existentially and experientially, Christ's crucifixion and resurrection has no relevance to these people, and it is "foolishness" to them (1 Corinthians 1:18). Christ's victory over the Devil is meaningless to those outside the kingdom, and so the Prince of the Air continues to rule over and intimidate these people. When the existential experience does not catch up with the factual truth of the cross, people live in depravity. They are like a man who is trying to farm a dry hard desert land in Saudi Arabia, not knowing that underneath that hard surface a huge amount of crude oil is waiting to be tapped. Experientially, this man is poor; but potentially, he is a multibillionaire. The world is intimidated by Satan who is a mighty lion, but for us who believe, the lion is mortally wounded (Colossians 1:13). We live in between two important events: after the cross and before the return of Christ, the already and the not yet. In this life, we are pilgrims and aliens, engaged in an unrelenting, daily battle. But we know that when Christ returns, the Devil will be completely crushed.

However, if we, the body of Christ, attribute to the Devil more power than he has, then we are diminishing what Christ accomplished through his death and resurrection. This is an insult to Christ. History took a new direction after the resurrection of Christ. Before

that historical event, the Devil had tremendous power. That power, however, was under God's sovereign control, and God used it to allow his beloved children to be tested and purified in the crucible of fire (Job 1:12; 2:6).

But after the death and resurrection of Christ, the Devil was disarmed, defeated, and his greatest weapon was crushed. Therefore, as we study passages from the Bible, we need to be careful not to take them out of their historical context.

We can also have confidence because the Holy Spirit dwells within us. He is holy, and his holiness is in diametrical opposition to deception and lies. Therefore, the Holy Spirit guides us, reveals the truth to us, and teaches us all things (John 14:26). Furthermore, the Holy Spirit who dwells within us is not a spirit of timidity and fear, but a spirit of power translated from the Greek word "*dunamis*" (2 Timothy 1:7). The power of the Holy Spirit within us is equal to the power, or "*dunamis*," that raised Jesus from the dead (Ephesians 1:19-20).

How sad it must be for God the Father when he looks at his children, seeing them indwelt by the powerful and truthful Holy Spirit, yet intimidated by a very loud, roaring lion who is mortally wounded. No wonder Paul warns us, "do not grieve the Holy Spirit." Do not underestimate the almighty God.

In conclusion, I would like to emphasize the following principle:

It is dangerous to be preoccupied with the Devil. In his deception, he hypnotizes God's children, and through his deception, he becomes larger than life, and thus competes with God for his glory.

We should *gaze* at God and *glance* at the Devil. When we, God's children, *glance* at the Devil in light of our *gaze* at God, then the Devil is seen accurately as disarmed and defeated. It is true that he is still a lion, the Prince of the Air; but the lion is mortally wounded. What an inexpressible joy it is to have a God-centered theology rather than an anti-Satan-centered theology. What glory it is to *gaze* at God and only *glance* at the Devil.

"Praise be to You, O Lord  
Yours, O Lord, is the greatness  
and the power and the glory  
and the majesty and the splendor,  
Yours, O Lord, is the kingdom;  
You are exalted as head over all."  
(1 Chronicles 29:10 - 11)

## CHAPTER 4

### DEMONIZATION

On D-Day, June 6, 1944, victory was guaranteed when the invasion of the allies at Normandy was successful, but that did not mean that all fighting stopped. Several battles continued for weeks and months. The same is true in our spiritual warfare. The day Jesus rose from the dead was D-day. On that day, the war was won and the Devil was defeated. His strongest weapons were destroyed. Yet the spiritual battles continue. One day, the fighting will cease on the day when the Devil is completely crushed.

#### Proper Perspective

Although the Normandy invasion assured victory for the allies, thousands of people died and were wounded after D-day. The bullets were real bullets, and the blood was real blood.

To use the metaphor of the lion—on D-day, when Jesus rose from the dead, the Devil was like a lion who became mortally wounded. The Devil is not an old, tired, and haggard lion. He is still young, strong, muscular, powerful, and deeply committed to evil. In fact, he could be even more tenacious and stubborn precisely because he is mortally wounded.

The major difference for us in our warfare is our perspective and frame of reference. Are we wrestling with the Enemy with a pre-D-day perspective or post-D-day perspective?

Some scholars believe that the build-up of evil we are experiencing these days must be like what Christ experienced before his crucifixion. Therefore, they believe that we should face the Enemy as Christ did, through power encounter.

Other scholars disagree with this view. They point out that because of the events of the cross and the resurrection, the epistles in the New Testament are the standard to follow in our wrestling with the Enemy. It is not a power encounter but a truth encounter.

Personally, I cannot ignore what Christ accomplished on the cross, but I must build on it. Furthermore, I believe there were power and truth encounters before the cross, and there have been power and truth encounters after the cross. Power does not need to be seen merely through signs and wonders, but power can also be seen in a sanctified life. *“The people were amazed at his teaching; because he taught them as one who had authority, not as teachers of the law”* (Mark 1:22; Matthew 7:29).

When Jesus started his public ministry after forty days of fasting, He encountered the Devil through truth, but there was power in that truth.

And as Jesus preached the Gospel and was faced with demonized individuals, he encountered the demons with power, but there was truth in that power. He taught the

crowds and his disciples about God and the Enemy. That power encounter was used not to produce “amazement and fascination” but to produce a desire for the truth.

After the events of the cross, we also see power-in-truth encounters and truth-in-power encounters.

Paul taught all night. When the sleepy, young man fell from the third-floor windowsill and died, Paul prayed for him, and he rose from the dead. Truth and power were in dynamic tension (Acts 20:7 - 12).

When the young woman who was demonized cried out and harassed Paul and his team, Paul cast out the demons from her and thus confirmed the message that was preached in that city (Acts 16:18).

When Paul preached to King Agrippa, the king’s heart burned within him because there was power in the preaching and the teaching of the word of God (Acts 26:28).

I see history as a horizontal line with the cross and the resurrection in the middle. The cross and the resurrection are the D-day. Before that D-day, Jesus was fighting a Devil with sharp teeth. After that D-day, we are still facing a tenacious enemy, but he is mortally wounded. How does this perspective help me as a Christian in my daily living? It gives me the confidence that God is more powerful than the Devil, and it helps me to shift my focus from fear of the Devil to trust in God. It is like a Christian who walks with God with an assurance of salvation in contrast to the one who is struggling in his Christian life because he has no assurance.

Victory can be experienced amid a relentless struggle against evil.

In his attack, the Devil, along with his emissaries, infiltrates and penetrates the world through the following *stands of the rope of evil*:

- Demonization
- Cultures
- Laws and Basic Beliefs
- Structures of Power
- Thought Life

In this chapter, we want to start with the first strand: *demonization*.

### **From Experience**

My family and I lived in Cairo, Egypt, for fifteen years. During these years, we had a ministry among the various strata of Egyptian society. On my team of those who were reaching out to Muslims, there was a man who was an exorcist. Rami (all names have

been changed) worked as an engineer. At his church, he was an elder and had a strong ministry of making disciples, but he was famous as a man of God who could cast out demons. Because of this reputation, he had many contacts with Muslims and nominal Christians that were demonized or possessed and who were brought to him by their relatives. One night of each week, a minimum of about twenty-five people would come to his church, from mostly Muslim backgrounds, to have their relatives delivered from demonization. Out of the twenty-five, there would be five or more that were demonized. In addition, several other evenings in the month were spent in exorcism as the need arose. I have personally seen Rami cast out demons several times, but I want to share only two stories to show you the stature of this man and to illustrate a principle that will be presented later in this chapter.

Several years ago, Rami had to go from Cairo to his hometown in southern Egypt. It was a long trip that usually took more than eight hours by bus. He sat in the middle of the bus in an aisle seat, spending much of the time reading his Bible. One can easily assume that the other passengers on the bus would have been nearly all Muslims.

As Rami closed his Bible, closed his eyes, and meditated on what he was reading, suddenly, the man sitting in the aisle seat across from him started jerking his head forward and backward in a very weird way. Rami did not know what was wrong with this man. Then, being an exorcist, the thought came to his mind, "perhaps he is demonized or possessed."

He prayed, "But Lord, what can I do about it? I am on a public bus, and it would be embarrassing to perform an exorcism in public." Rami wrestled with God for about fifteen minutes before he was willing to do whatever God wanted him to do. Finally, he shouted out in a loud voice commanding whoever was demon possessed to raise both arms up.

The only one who raised his arms up and closed his eyes was that man across from him in the other aisle seat. You can imagine how everybody in the bus was shocked and watched intently. The driver was shouting out and asking those who stood up to sit down, because he wanted to see in the mirror what was happening. Rami commanded the demons to respond to his questions. In the process, Rami found out how those demons were controlling the man and influencing him in all areas of his life.

Finally, Rami commanded the evil spirits, saying, "I am going to command you in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ to come out of him. In whose name am I commanding you?" The main demon speaking on behalf of the other demons answered, "In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ." Then Rami commanded: "Louder," so the demon answered in a louder voice, "In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ." Again, Rami commanded, "Louder," because he wanted everybody on the bus to know the authority of Christ. The demon answered in a louder voice, "In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ."

Rami then cast the demons out, the man's arms dropped down, and he opened his eyes, not knowing what had happened. Rami continued to share about Jesus to those sitting in the bus around him during the rest of the journey.

I did not witness this story but heard it from Rami and I trust him. In this second story, I lived its results for months during one of the years when we were living in Egypt.

The second story is about a man, his wife and their two teenage children who also lived in Cairo. Rami was asked to come and visit this Muslim family and find out if the man, Murad, was demonized. This family had been tormented by demons for months; and in desperation, they came to Rami and asked for his help. Rami visited them and learned that only the mother was demonized. He prayed and commanded the demons to respond, and he discovered through their response that the lady was demonized by four demons. When he commanded them to come out, they refused. So, he told the family that he would come a week later as he needed to spend the following days fasting and praying.

When Rami says: "give me a week to fast and pray," he means that he will not eat breakfast for a week and will remember to pray for the family whenever he feels hungry.

Murad and his family assumed that Rami was powerless and would never come back again. So, right away, they started looking for other exorcists to help them. A Muslim exorcist came, and the demons responded but refused to come out. Instead of commanding the demons to come out, this exorcist started to plead to the demons to stop tormenting the family. If the demons demand a blood sacrifice to reduce the stress and torment on the family, then it becomes difficult to cast the demons out. Perhaps that was the reason why Rami could not cast the demons out the first time.

Rami's sister who is a neighbor to Murad's family learned that they had brought in another exorcist. So, she told her brother Rami about it and he did not go any more to Murad's house. Months later, Murad went back to Rami and asked him again to come and help them. So, Rami promised that he would come to the home a week later Friday evening after he spent a week in prayer and fasting.

On that Friday of the following week, Rami went to the apartment of Murad, along with another man on my team named Samuel (this is his real name). The apartment was packed with relatives and neighbors who had come to watch. One would think that an event of this nature would be very private.

It was Samuel's first exposure to this kind of ministry. Both Rami and Samuel were very much aware of the potential for evangelism in this situation.

Rami prayed for Siham, Murad's wife, and commanded the evil spirits to talk. Again, he found that she was possessed with four demons and that these demons were responsible for the torment she and her family were going through. The demons also informed Rami that Siham had a growth on her abdomen that the demons were responsible for. Neither Murad nor Siham had told Rami about the growth. Rami commanded the demons to remove the growth but did not command the demons to come out. Rami then asked Murad and Siham to go into the bedroom and check whether the growth was still there. They came back beaming with joy, assuming that she had been healed. Rami pointed out that even though the symptom was removed,

the cause, namely the four evil spirits remained. (At a later time, we found out that Siham was told by the doctor that she needed to have surgery to get that growth removed).

Rami resumed talking to the demons and said to them something that he had never done before: "I want you to come out of this lady and enter that gentlemen," pointing to Samuel. The demon speaking on behalf of the other demons answered, "We cannot, because this man is a man of God." Samuel sighed a sigh of relief!

Rami wanted to teach the large group in the apartment that there is safety in standing under the umbrella of Christ's authority.

That same night, Siham invited Christ into her life, and the whole evening was a tremendous opportunity to share the Gospel with the neighbors and relatives who had come to watch.

Two days later, on Sunday evening, Rami, Samuel, and I went to visit Murad's family. When we arrived, Murad wanted to kiss the hand of Rami to express his gratitude, but of course, Rami did not let him do that but instead gave him a hug and told him that it was Jesus who did the miracle. On that day, Rami was treated like a major prophet and Samuel and I were like his boys. Starting that night and for months to come, we had Bible study every Sunday evening with that family. On that first Sunday, Rami lead the Bible study, but we took turns leading it from then on.

When I think of Siham now, she impresses me as one of the very few people I know who prays without ceasing. It seems that she was tormented by the demonic to such a degree that upon her deliverance she was deeply grateful to Jesus.

For about ten months we went to that family every Sunday night and had an evangelistic Bible study. One of the joys for me when I think back on that time, is how the same text in the Scriptures could speak truth to both the wife who was born again and to the rest of the family who needed to be challenged to commit their lives to Christ.

On what was to be our last visit to that home, Murad told us that a certain neighbor had threatened to report the three of us and Murad's family to the secret police because she had guessed accurately that we were meeting to study the Bible and pray. So, from then on, we stopped going to Murad's house and Rami's sister continued with the family. Since that time, I have learned that Murad and his son came to Christ, but the daughter is still resisting.

I personally believe that demonization and exorcism happen today. I do not believe that this is based solely on what I have seen because my experience cannot prove truth; it only illustrates it. In the rest of this chapter, I will give the reason why I believe that this phenomenon is still in existence today.



## Truths and Principles

Demonization does not necessarily mean being owned or possessed by a demon, but it means the demonized person is living under the control of Satan.

I have used the terms “being possessed” and “being demonized” interchangeably, simply to mean being under the control of the Devil. The word “*demonized*” is a better word because it infers the whole spectrum of demonic influence, from being under the control of the Devil to being possessed by demons. So, I will continue using the term “*demonized*.”

The following are some truths and principles that I have come to believe. Some of these truths and principles are now convictions, while others are still in the process of being formed.

For some of these truths and principles, we can find clear and obvious teaching from the Scriptures. For others, we can conjecture on the basis that they ring true.

### 1. *Authority Principle*

Because of the authority given to us, every Christian should be ready to cast out demons in the name of Christ when the need demands it. Not being gifted should not excuse us.

- “If God is for us, who is against us?” (Romans 8:31)
- We are given the authority over the power of the Enemy. (Luke 10:17 - 19).
- All authority is given to Christ, and he is with us always. (Matthew 28:18 - 20).

### 2. *Giftedness Principle*

I have known some men of God who spent hours casting out a demon. In contrast, I have also seen, or known, others who have cast out demons in five minutes.

Is exorcism a gift? We can ask the same question about evangelism. There are people who take a long time to lead a person to Christ, while Dr. Billy Graham expects to see converts after every sermon he preaches.

God has stretched out and enlarged the spiritual capacities of Dr. Graham to the degree that it is somewhat easier for him to believe God for converts. In that sense, he is gifted, and part of that giftedness is acquired through experience.

Rami, my friend in Egypt, is also “gifted,” for it is somewhat easier for him than for others to believe that God provides the authority to cast out demons.

### 3. *Confirmation Principle*

In the time of the Apostles, the New Testament had not been canonized, and parts of it had not even been written down. "Oral documents" of what Jesus had taught and done were commonplace instead. Signs and miracles confirmed these oral documents.

Nowadays, I believe that God is choosing to confirm, with signs and wonders, the written Word to groups of people on the frontiers of missions.

Mission reports from around the world illustrate this truth. However, the phenomenon of demonization is also real in America. Neil Anderson, Fred Dickason, Tom White and others who are authors on this subject refer to it extensively. Scott Peck wrote about demonization in the last section of his book *People of the Lie*, which studies the phenomenon of evil from a psychological perspective.

Are these indications that even the United States of America is becoming secular and is becoming a heathen country, where the truth needs to be confirmed with power so that people will listen? This would be a sad reality.

#### 4. *Power and Truth Principle*

Signs and wonders, such as casting out demons, can produce only "amazement" if they are not accompanied by the preaching and the teaching of the Word of God. In fact, Jesus pointed out that it is dangerous to cleanse a human life of a demon and leave it empty.

In Acts 8, there is an interesting contrast between "amazement" on the one hand and repentance and conversion on the other, demonstrated in the life of Simon the sorcerer.

#### 5. *Limited Demonic Power Principle*

The Devil has no power over me in things that really matter. He can place an obstacle before me that prevents me from achieving an important but not crucial need, but he can never prevent me from knowing God and seeking his glory, which is our primary and indispensable need (Romans 8:33 - 39).

#### 6. *Derived Demonic Power Principle*

The authority and power that the Devil has over my life comes from my surrendering my will to him. The Devil has only as much authority as I give him, or as much as God permits, for the purpose of my becoming more and more like Jesus (Job 1:12).

#### 7. *Vulnerability Principle*

Demonization takes place mainly with non-Christians, but if the born-again Christian makes himself vulnerable to the Devil, he can fall under his control and influence.

Some of the main areas where we can open our lives to the Devil are:

- A life of lies, hypocrisy and manipulating others under the guise of righteousness. (I highly recommend the book *People of the Lie* by Scott Peck.)
- Drugs
- Prolonged anger, bitterness, or resentment
- Prolonged refusal to listen to and obey the Holy Spirit. Treating God with contempt and with prolonged defiance
- Dabbling with witchcraft, sorcery, the occult, and Satan worship
- Covenants or deals with Satan
- Prolonged self-pity
- Addictions

I highly recommend to you my book [\*Unshackled and Growing: Muslims and Christians on the Journey to Freedom\*](#). The first half of the book is on the gospel and grace and the second half of the book is on disciplines of grace. It is about freedom from legalism.

#### 8. *Freedom Principle*

People can be freed from Satanic influence, be it demonization, or in cultures, or in thought life and so on, through various methods. For some people, it could be through casting out the demons (demonization), and for others, through counseling and renewing the mind with basic Biblical truths (thought life).

Diagnosing every kind of Satanic influence as a form of demonization is a microscopic view of spiritual warfare. Therefore, a panoramic view of spiritual warfare helps us to make a more accurate diagnosis.

#### 9. *Saturation Principle*

Colossians 3:16 teaches us that the word of God should dwell within us and saturate our minds. Being saturated with the word of God by keeping our eyes focused on Jesus is not only safe for us but is threatening to the Devil. The gates of hell cannot stand against the victorious march of God's people.

#### 10. *Team Ministry Principle*

The person with the "gift" of exorcism should be part of a team and not on his own. He should be complemented by fellow team members who are strong in teaching the Word of God and in evangelism. Otherwise, the fruit of his ministry will be temporary, and partial deliverance will be characterized by "amazement" rather than by repentance and conversion.

## 11. *Covenant of Grace Principle*

Some evangelicals have the tendency to emphasize the ancestral or generational bondages of Satan without emphasizing the covenant of grace. I believe that the vicious cycle of the sins of the fathers can be broken when the covenant of grace becomes operational in people's lives. Paul uses the strongest language when he speaks of this new covenant of grace. *"He chose us in him before the creation of the world (i.e., before our parents sinned) to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love he predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves. In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace that he lavished (gave freely and in abundance) on us"* (Ephesians 1:4 - 8).

I believe that the visitation of the sins of the fathers has been superseded by the covenant of grace.

Our tendency is to believe that justification and glorification are by sheer grace, and they are. But when it comes to sanctification, it is hard for us to believe that it is also by grace through faith. May God give us the spiritual insight and understanding to realize that he lavished upon us the riches of his grace. (A key passage in the Old Testament on this subject is Ezekiel 18).

## 12. *Suspended Judgment Principle*

Perhaps the wise thing to do is to suspend our final judgment on this phenomenon of demonization until we have learned more, especially in areas where the Bible does not teach clearly. Waiting might be a virtue.

We should neither get carried away by stories, believing everything we hear nor have an attitude of refusing to believe and denying the existence of the phenomenon of demonization.

May God help us to be wise and humble as we wait upon him to teach us primarily from the Bible and secondarily from life and experience.

In conclusion, as we consider Jesus, we see that:

- He did not practice deliverance with every demonized person. This was not his primary calling.
- None of his primary disciples, including Paul, came from a demonized background.
- His great victory over Satan did not come through a ministry of exorcism but through choosing the way of the cross. He was tempted by the Devil to bypass the way of the cross at the beginning of his public ministry and again in the Garden of Gethsemane before the cross, but he resisted both temptations.

- Before the crucifixion and the resurrection, Jesus' spiritual warfare was with a strong lion who was not mortally wounded.
- In our spiritual warfare as God's children, we face a strong enemy but one who has been mortally wounded. He roars loud to appear larger than life.

In the next chapter, we will deal with our spiritual warfare against Satan and his influence on cultures.

## CHAPTER 5

### SATANIC INFLUENCE IN CULTURES

#### The Phenomenon of Cultures

According to Genesis 11:1-4, the whole world at one time had one language and a common speech. As men moved eastward, they found a place in Shinar (Babylon) and settled there. They said to one another, *“let us build ourselves a city, with a tower that reaches to the heavens, so that we may make a name for ourselves.”* (Genesis 11:4).

We see in this text that the world was one culture at first. All people had one language, the same set of values, customs, and traditions, but God confused their language (Genesis 11:7) so that they could not understand one another and thus became scattered. With this dispersion, a multiplicity of cultures came into existence.

Why did God confuse their language and scatter them on the face of the earth?

Farmers who export apples wrap each apple alone in a separate sheet of thin paper; they then stack these wrapped apples in boxes. They do this to protect the apples from rotting. If one apple goes bad, it will not affect the other apples because it is insulated from the others. When God saw that the inhabitants Babel, with their one culture (Tower of Babel), were becoming rotten, he scattered them all over the face of the earth to protect the world from going bad. The main purpose for the multiplicity of cultures is to insulate people from infecting one another with evil.

A beautiful contrast to Genesis 11 is in Acts 2. We see God working out a miracle which is the exact opposite of scattering people into a variety of cultures. *“Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven. When they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard them speaking in his own language”* (Acts 2:5-6).

To help us imagine what it must have been like in those days, let us consider a modern illustration.

Once a year there is a major Muslim pilgrimage to Mecca in Saudi Arabia. Muslims from around the world come to Mecca for a special event. Preparations for it start months in advance as these Muslims begin to save money, increasingly practice their religious duties, and work harder to avoid committing sin so that their pilgrimage will be more acceptable to God. As the trip starts for these individuals from various parts of the world, by air, sea and land, their religiosity increases. As they arrive in Mecca, they experience unity around their shared religion of Islam, despite their diversity of cultures, languages, customs, and traditions. But even though they share this unity in religion, they are still separated by a great diversity of cultures and especially languages, so that each group that shares one culture and language tends to stay together: Indonesians with Indonesians, Nigerians with Nigerians, Pakistanis with Pakistanis and so on.

During the pilgrimage, Muslims who are not bilingual cannot communicate with other Muslims who speak a different language. But what would it be like if suddenly, a Saudi who knew only Arabic found himself able to communicate with Nigerians, Filipinos, Turks, and Indians in their own languages?

Perhaps the situation in Jerusalem was a bit like this fictional story in Mecca. The amazing thing is that those pilgrims in Jerusalem heard the Galileans, who probably knew only their own language with their own accent, speaking the languages of all the different pilgrims.

God gave these Jews from diverse cultures the miraculous ability to understand and communicate with one another. It had been necessary at the time of the Tower of Babel to introduce a diversity of cultures to prevent the evil that was present in one group of people or culture from infecting the whole world. But the descent of the Holy Spirit in Acts 2 has brought renewed communication, understanding and a unity to God's people despite their diversity of cultures and languages.

### **Erosion in Cultures**

Until a certain time in history, one could possibly have said that one country had an evil culture, and another country had a relatively virtuous culture. But these days it is impossible to continue using these categories in describing cultures. There is no pure culture, and there is no completely evil culture. All cultures are infected with Satanic influences to some degree or another, and all cultures have some strands of goodness.

Culture is like the atmosphere that people live in. It includes religion, language, customs, traditions, values, and social norms. It is like the air that we breathe and like the law of gravity that we take for granted. It is like water for fish and air for birds, since no one lives in a vacuum.

When a person is totally immersed in his culture and has no exposure to other cultures, he loses his sensitivity to detect evil in his own culture. It is like someone who is cleaning a stable and after being inside the stable for some time, he becomes accustomed to the bad odor and is no longer bothered by it. But when he goes out and breathes some fresh air and then comes back into the stable, he will be able to detect the terrible smell. Similarly, unless we frequently go to the Bible for fresh air, we lose our sensitivity to detect evil in our cultures.

Satan, is a roaring lion who along with his principalities, is attempting to bring about alienation from God and spiritual blindness. His goal is the destruction of man. His main strategy is subtle deception. The channels of his attacks are demonization, laws, basic beliefs, structures of power, thought life and cultures.

Satan's desire is to pollute cultures with evil to bring about slow, steady and increasing spiritual blindness. In that familiar experiment where a frog was placed in a container of hot water, the frog immediately jumped out. But when that same frog was placed in warm water which was then gradually heated to the boiling point, the frog did not jump out and was boiled alive.

This is what the Devil is set on doing—slowly polluting every culture until humanity is destroyed without it realizing it.

Are we aware of evil in our cultures? Do we hate evil to the degree that we are willing to do something about it? Are we willing to put on the whole armor of God and engage in spiritual warfare?

Pollution in cultures can be as dangerous and even more dangerous than demonization. God's standard for purity in the Bible is extremely high, especially when it came to protecting the culture of his people from pollution as we see in this text. "*They took things from the tent (of Achan), brought them to Joshua and all the Israelites spread them out before the Lord. Then Joshua, together with all Israel, took Achan, the silver, the robe, the gold wedge, his sons, his daughters, his cattle, donkeys and sheep, his tent and all that he had, to the valley of Achor. Then all Israel stoned him, and after they had stoned the rest, they burned them*" (Joshua 7:23 - 25). Evil was totally eradicated from the camp of God's people. This was the way to protect the culture from getting polluted. For pollution is like leprosy, and the way they dealt with leprosy in the Old Testament was by declaring the leper unclean and by demanding the leper to be ostracized from society so that he would not infect others with his disease (Leviticus 13 - 14).

Let me illustrate how pollution endangers our cultures today. Economic systems are not good or bad in themselves, but greed in any economic system is always sin. When greed is not dealt with, it develops into a "spirit of greed" that permeates the culture. Once the "spirit of greed" is justified and philosophized (Isaiah 5:20), it becomes like a disease that causes a slow but sure erosion and, finally, deterioration of the culture.

The Bible states clearly that witchcraft, sorcery, sexual perversion and lies are sin. When we allow them to exist in our culture and even justify their existence and make them normal, we are allowing sin to eat away at the heart of our culture.

We will sooner or later find ourselves harassed and intimidated by a fatally wounded but dangerous Satan who is causing the whole of society to drift away from God. Are we willing to engage in spiritual warfare and not be intimidated by Satanic influences in our society? The Christians in Ephesus celebrated their new life by building a bonfire and burning a huge number of books on sorcery and witchcraft. If they had not done so and instead allowed themselves to coexist with evil, they might have ended up as a weak and colorless church. May we wake up from our sleep, put on the armor of God and engage in spiritual warfare before it becomes too late for our cultures. The Roman Empire, with all its greatness, disintegrated and collapsed. May our spiritual alertness help us to detect evil, hate it and do something about it before God removes the lamp stand from our midst (Revelation 2:4 - 5).

## **Practical Suggestions**

1. *Be careful.* We need to be careful not to be naïve about defilement in cultures, whether our own or the cultures of others. Ouija boards, occult practices, sorcery and



magic rituals, along with fantasy roleplaying games and many video games are all dangerous. We also need to be careful about what we buy in terms of souvenirs as we travel abroad.

2. *But do not be crippled with fear.* Although we need to be careful, we ought not be so crippled with fear that we lose our effectiveness in reaching the secular and people of other religions in the world. If an Egyptian brings me a gift of valuable and expensive papyrus paper that has a drawing of a pyramid on it, and on the top of the pyramid there is a drawing of an eye, will I receive the gift graciously? Will I even be willing to frame it and hang it up in our house, provided I honestly like the art and sincerely desire to honor my friend to whom I am witnessing? Or will I panic and discard the papyrus drawing as soon as my friend leaves because I am intimidated and crippled by fear? Do I do the same with the dollar bills that have the same drawing? Why am I not crippled with fear at the sight of the same pyramid on a dollar bill?

3. *Carefulness versus legalism.* Every individual or family tends to build fences to protect themselves from sin. God gave his people the Ten Commandments. Then, over the centuries, the Jews developed endless lists of fences to protect themselves from breaking the law. No wonder Jesus had a hard time with the Pharisees of his day, as he saw them crippled and crippling others with their multitudes of fences that became as binding as God's laws and commandments.

A friend of mine struggled for a while with the problem of spending too much time watching television to the point where he was not exercising responsible self-control. Every night he would drift into the television room and spend hours in front of the screen. So, he decided to build a fence. His fence was to stop watching television for one month. Only after he had regained self-control did he begin to watch television in a disciplined manner.

My friend's fence was merely a fence and not a law. There is no commandment that says, "Thou shalt not watch television." Yet people confuse their own fences with God's law, and they even go a step further by imposing their fences as laws on other Christians.

As we consider this area of sin in culture, we need to be sensitive to:

- 1) Establishing our own fences.
- 2) Not confusing our fences with God's law; and
- 3) Not imposing our fences on others.

In the next chapter we will address the issue of our spiritual warfare against Satanic influence in laws and basic beliefs.

## CHAPTER 6

### SATANIC INFLUENCE IN LAWS AND BASIC BELIEFS

#### Laws and Legislations

Laws are extremely important because they set the limits and the boundaries for the behavior of individuals and groups in a community. When laws are observed, order, mutual respect and life can be maintained in a society.

Laws are often seen as a threat to freedom. This could be true, depending on who sets them and with what motives. In a family situation, for instance, when loving parents establish laws, limits and boundaries for their children, they contribute to the children's security and sense of confidence. The same can be true in a nation.

Can you imagine what it would feel like to stand on a balcony on the seventieth floor of a skyscraper and have no railings on that balcony? Have you ever experienced going up the steps in an unfinished building where there are no railings by the stairs? I have experienced that in Egypt. Your tendency is to go up the steps slowly, pressing against the wall, out of fear that you might fall. There is great value in having laws, limits, and boundaries. They are like railings that give a sense of safety.

There are written laws, and there are accepted conventions or unwritten laws. The written laws form the legal codes or policies of a nation, a company or a church. While the unwritten laws form a bulk of social, ethical, and cultural limits and boundaries. These could become as binding as the written laws themselves.

Some laws are inherently bad, others are inadequate and could be improved upon, while yet other laws are good but can be abused by evil people. In general, laws are good because they are essential to life. Yet, these same laws can become evil when sinful people bend and distort them and take advantage of loopholes in them to accomplish their own sinful purposes.

#### Basic Beliefs

Many times, unwritten laws are formed on the foundation of basic beliefs. These basic beliefs are the unquestioned presuppositions people tend to have regarding the nature of things. Basic beliefs serve as the frame of reference by which we judge what is important and what is not. In some ways, they are like lenses through which we view reality and determine what is trivial and what is worthy of worship.

Basic beliefs are usually implicit in a culture. A child unconsciously learns them and wears them as lenses. As she grows up, they become part of her and determine her perspective.

Can Satan use written laws and legislation? Can he permeate the conventional or unwritten laws? Can Satan shape the basic beliefs in a nation and thus determine the perspective of multitudes of people on how they perceive reality.

Some Bible scholars, when they studied Ephesians 6:12 regarding the nature of rulers, authorities, cosmic powers, and spiritual forces, concluded that Paul and others in the Bible are talking about demonic hierarchies that rule the earth. Other Bible scholars believed that rulers, authorities, cosmic powers and spiritual forces in Ephesians 6 and other passages are human structures of power, whether political, economic, social or whatever.

Personally, I believe that Ephesians 6:12 is not necessarily talking about either of these two options. Taking either of these two interpretations is, perhaps, reading between the lines and bending the Scriptures to fit our already established conclusions. The New Testament does not clearly separate and distinguish between the realm of the spiritual and the realm of human powers. We see very clearly in the New Testament that God is the one who establishes human authority. *“There is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God”* (Romans 13:1). Yet we know that the Devil can penetrate, permeate, and control these systems to the degree of making them demonic.

Therefore, if in our spiritual warfare, we are programmed only to detect evil in the supernatural realm, we might not even notice that Satan is active through some of our laws, legislation and, more importantly, in our basic beliefs.

We will be like an army which is trained to combat regular armies with traditional warfare techniques but is not ready, trained nor equipped to combat guerillas who use different techniques in their warfare.

May God help us to put on the whole armor of God so that we can engage in a spiritual warfare which is neither partial nor inadequate. May his armor help us not only to close firmly the front door against the Devil, but so ensure that the back door and the side windows are closed as well. May God help us to have a panoramic view of spiritual warfare.

Satan can embody, penetrate, and control human authorities and use them to serve him and oppose God. This takes various shapes and forms.

## **1. Laws Formed Because of Evil Intentions**

The competitors of Daniel, out of jealousy, maneuvered the king to create a law that would force him to place Daniel in the den of lions (Daniel 6).

There are laws in every country that are created because of evil intentions, and these laws are available channels for the Devil.

## **2. Inadequate Laws**

Some laws allow evil people, motivated by greed or other self-centered purposes, to take advantage of loopholes inherent in them. These inadequate laws are other channels that the Devil uses.

### **3. Satanic Influence in Laws and Basic Beliefs**

In 1948, a young man from Egypt was sent to the United States of America on a scholarship to observe the educational system in the United States and to be exposed to the Western way of life where “dreams can happen.”

Sayid Qutb was at that time a semi-secular Muslim, although he had memorized the whole Qur’an by the age of twelve.

As he made his way by ship to the United States, a European woman who was drunk barged into his cabin and immodestly offered to sleep with him. He shooed her out, but out of fear he might lose his moral standards, he decided to pray every day to guard himself against sin.

In the States, he was exposed to many Americans from various walks of life. He was impressed by the cinema industry. He observed the power of advertising. He witnessed an event at a church in Greeley, Colorado, where the youth group meeting had a sensual dance. He observed the crude excitement of people watching a boxing match. He also observed the positive value of fine arts such as classical music and ballet.

While he was in the States, he analytically observed the basic beliefs of Americans and decided to become a Muslim fundamentalist. In one of the chapters in his famous book *Milestones*, he vehemently attacked some of the basic beliefs in the United States, pointing out that they fall short of Islamic standards. What Sayid Qutb did not realize is that these basic beliefs fall short of Biblical standards as well.

His book *Milestones* is one of the major texts used to disciple Muslims and make them fundamentalists. Qutb is one of the modern pillars of Islamic fundamentalism, and the irony of it is that his “conversion” to fundamentalism took place while he was living in America.

Qutb is an analytical observer assessing American culture from the outside. Harold Bloom, on the other hand, in his book *The Closing of the American Mind*, analytically observed the United States from within and reached similar conclusions from an academic perspective. David Nobel, in his book, *Understanding the Times*, observed laws and basic beliefs from an evangelical perspective and pointed out how the United States has drifted into secular humanism, far away from Biblical Christianity.

Has Satan penetrated our laws and basic beliefs in Europe and in North America? Are we called as Christians to engage in spiritual warfare against our enemy in this area of laws and basic beliefs?

The following are a few illustrations of how Satan is deeply and effectively at work in this area of laws and basic beliefs in the United States:

- 1) In the early 1960s, a major turning point took place in the United States of America regarding the whole area of materialism. *Greed*, which is considered as sin according to the Bible, was declared an accepted value: "It is okay to be greedy. Actually, greed could be the horsepower needed to keep you aspiring for success and achievement." Greedy people have been around since the creation of mankind; but once it could be openly acknowledged, practiced, and even applauded, greed was transformed into the "spirit of greed" that has permeated and infiltrated many walks of life. One of many illustrations could be the common practice of suing for the sake of making easy money.
- 2) The same could be said about *lying and denying* one's sins. If a politician admits that he cheated on his wife, or that he embezzled funds, it is perceived as weakness. Lying and denying is perceived as a strength. A senior politician gave this advice regarding denial, "You've got to deny, deny, deny and push back on these women... If you admit to anything and any culpability, then you are dead. That was a big mistake you made... Never admit." This is contrary to what we see in the Scriptures. In Proverbs 28:13 in *The Message* we see the following: "*You can't whitewash your sins and get by with it; you find mercy by admitting and leaving them.*" If lying about one's sins becomes the norm, what will happen to our values?
- 3) So many movies and TV shows are indoctrinating us in subtle ways that homosexuality is normal and that accepting it is a proof of our open-mindedness. We are considered intolerant if we disagree with that assumption.

May God help us to be courageous in examining our basic beliefs so that we can detect whether Satan has been in control without our being aware of him. May God help us to hate and resist the Devil in our basic beliefs and worldviews.

We could have a long list of basic beliefs that have some truth but not the whole truth, that we have taken for granted as "Christian," while the Devil could be using them to control us. The list could include:

- Relativism and avoiding absolutes as an indication of "Christian open-mindedness" versus Christ's claims of authority and absolute statements.
- God's wisdom and the world's foolishness.
- Pragmatism as proof of what is true versus obedience to the Word of God and awareness of sinful motives, attitudes, and standards.
- Individualism (Western way) versus the concept of community and the emphasis on the "one another" relationships that we see in the New Testament.
- Self-actualization versus obedience and dying to self.

- Immediate gratification versus sanctification as a process, where delayed gratification is embodied in the concept of Biblical hope and trials and testing as God's loving discipline.
- Perceiving ourselves as victims and blaming society or our circumstances for problems and difficulties versus God's sovereignty, control, and goodness.
- Workaholism versus faithful and responsible stewardship of our time and efforts.
- Success versus giftedness and stewardship, where motive, attitude and standards are more important than results.

It will be interesting to add to this list and analyze ourselves in light of each of these basic beliefs. May God help us to come to him with a "Psalm 139 and 51" attitude and repent of compromise in our lives.

The Devil is trying to cement his laws both outside us and inside our minds as basic beliefs. May God help us to wage war on both fronts.

## CHAPTER 7

### SATANIC INFLUENCE THROUGH STRUCTURES OF POWER

#### Power of the Individual

Power is neutral. It can be used either for good or for evil.

People typically obtain power by gaining wealth, acquiring authority, experiencing daring courage or influencing others. Some examples are:

- Saul of Tarsus was given authority to go to Damascus and persecute the Christians.
- Herod the Great had executive authority to put to death all baby boys that were below two years of age to ensure that Jesus would not be allowed to grow up and thus compete with him or with his children for the throne.
- Joseph of Arimathea, because of his riches and his standing in the community, had the power to enter the palace of Pilate and ask for the body of Jesus after the crucifixion.
- The High Priest, during the trial of Jesus, decided for Judaism that Jesus was not the Messiah. So, he tore his clothes in disgust rather than fall on his knees before the incarnate God.
- Parents have authority over their children. The younger and the more dependent the child, the greater power of the parents.

Authority and power can be used to love, serve, and develop people. Jesus and Paul, for example, poured out their lives serving and loving others. In contrast, many others have misused their power for evil.

#### Power in the Group

A young man might be harmless if he is walking alone at night in a dark street. But if you meet this young man at night while he is accompanied by a gang, he might be quite dangerous.

*“Two are better than one. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken”* (Ecclesiastes 4:9, 12). Jesus said, *“I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything you ask for, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven. For where two or three come together in my name, there I am with them”* (Matthew 18:19 - 20).

Jesus’ spiritual presence is promised to the two or three who come together in his name. The same could be true regarding the spiritual presence of the Devil, or his demonic assistants, among groups who are working together for evil. There is special power in unity.

Peter rebuked Sapphira not only because she lied, but also because she conspired with her husband to lie. It seems that the guilt of sin is compounded when people plan evil together. *“How could you agree to test the Spirit of the Lord? Look! The feet of the men who buried your husband are at the door, and they will carry you out also”* (Acts 5:9).

Ahab and Jezebel were another couple who united to achieve evil goals and, as a result, became instruments of Satan.

Yet life is not always black and white, often there are grey areas. A group of people could at times unite in the name of Christ towards the goal of serving and loving people, and thus experience the spiritual presence of Christ in their midst. That same group of people could consciously or unconsciously unite and, with impure motives, make decisions that are based on manipulating and using people and thus experience demonic presence and influence.

We could be sensitive against a certain set of sins, and yet we could have a blind spot against another set of sins. Therefore, at times we could be clean channels for the Holy Spirit, and at other times we could be available instruments for the Devil as we behave in the flesh.

Missionaries are usually considered pillars who are on the frontline in God’s service. Herbert Kane summarizes the tremendous accomplishments of missionaries over the past two hundred years (in Scott 1980:25):

- They loved the people among whom they worked.
- They appreciated the cultures in which they lived.
- They learned the languages of the people they served.
- They translated the Bible.
- They provided modern education to the people they served.
- They believed in the potential of the nationals.
- They opened hospitals and clinics.
- They planted churches wherever they went.

Yet these missionaries went wrong in several areas because they either had a blind spot or had cultural prejudices. Herbert Kane summarizes these wrong directions as follows:

- They had a prejudiced view against other religions.



- They failed to differentiate between what is Biblical theology and what is Western culture.
- They brought denominationalism with them from the West.
- Although they had some appreciation for the cultures of the people they served, they did not encourage contextualization.
- They communicated a paternalistic and controlling attitude to the nationals.
- They generally identified themselves with colonial powers.

We might disagree with Kane on how he generalized both the strengths and weaknesses of these missionaries by using the word *they* instead of *some*, yet the question is still worth asking: Could God's people, even some dedicated missionaries who are God's servants, be used as instruments of Satan? God's eyes are not alone in searching the world for individuals and groups willing to wholeheartedly serve him. Satan the mortally wounded enemy is also intently looking for structures of power that could become his channels for evil.

## **Other Forms of Power**

### **1. Prejudice**

People tend to develop stereotypes with which they can easily explain other cultures or groups and then place them into neat pigeonholes. Prejudice could well be one of the most effective structures of power that Satan uses.

A Christian who is prejudiced against Muslims will tend to fear them and have a judgmental attitude with no compassion. Even if he prays for them, it could be with the wrong motive. For sure, the Pharisees of Jesus' day prayed for the Gentiles, but I doubt whether God heard their prayers.

Could some of the Christians today, who are pleasing God in their enthusiasm against abortion, drunkenness, and the drug culture, be guilty of making themselves available to Satan through prejudiced stereotypes against people of other religions or other racial groups? We always seem to stand on shaky ground when we fight against something instead of for something. Unless we understand and have compassion and love for pro-abortionists, drunkards and druggies, our fight against these sins will only communicate hatred and bigotry.

May God help us to be alert to the Devil's deceptive schemes in our spiritual warfare.

### **2. Economic Injustice**

Money, position, and knowledge can contribute greatly to forming structures of power. With money, knowledge and positions of authority, a great deal of manipulation and control can take place, and the Devil is quite aware of this potential. A small minority of

people on our globe who are in power (be it in First or Third World countries) control most of the world's resources and services, while the huge majority is deprived of these resources and services. This huge majority has little opportunity to catch up with the privileged few. This is not only true of nations but also of cities. Can the blacks in Chicago catch up with the whites when systematic injustice is in place?

The privileged versus the underprivileged are called the "Haves" and the "Have Nots." Twenty percent of the world's population possesses about eighty percent of the world's resources and services. More than one billion people subsist on less than hundred Dollars a year. Most of these people are malnourished. Children's brains are mostly developed in the first two years of life. So if the child is not properly nourished in these two formative years, he could lose twenty-five percent of his mental capacities. So many children of the world, even from the first years of life, are doomed to poverty, lack of potential and dependency (in Scott 1980:124-129).

The privileged few have the power to control and manipulate circumstances to their advantage through control of the military, advertising, movie industry, blackmail, or bribery. Of course, these activities will never be labeled as bribery, blackmail, or threats, but will instead be euphemized as "incentives" or "serious advice." For the privileged few, an advertisement is an option among many other options, where the individual is free to choose whom to believe and what to buy. But for the underprivileged, who are not used to advertising, that same commercial appears as gospel truth.

Because of the power that the privileged nations have, global decisions are made to their advantage or in accordance with their views. The principle of "might is right" is a powerful tool.

Nevertheless, the underprivileged masses continue to be dependent on the rich nations and the powerful elite in their countries. They are miserably aware of this fact and realize that the changes required for them to catch up with the privileged few nations that mostly claim to be Christian nations are almost impossible to achieve. These masses of underprivileged people tend to become hostile and bitter and very vulnerable to religious ideas that promise them dignity and false hope. This, in turn, will hinder the mobility of the gospel in the world.

Are we aware of the Devil at work in structures of power—in the mass media, advertising, the movie industry, the intellectual structures, economic and political structures?

Are we willing to put on the whole armor of God and engage in spiritual warfare with our enemy—the Devil who is efficient in using the power structures of our day?

### **3. Positions of Power**

In 1991, as I studied a book on the history of missions by David Bosch, titled *Transforming Mission*, I was impressed by the panoramic view of spiritual warfare that

can be seen throughout the history of the Church. All five strands of the rope of spiritual warfare were experienced in the history of the Church. Yet it seems that the Devil made the greatest gain and brought the greatest suffering to the people of God through the strand of structures of power. Dictators like Nero, Hitler, corrupt popes, and colonial powers that wanted to “civilize” the world are but a few of the many illustrations that we can easily point out.

Not only in Church history do we see the impact of evil through structures of power, but we can even see it as well in Biblical history. The following are a few illustrations:

- Joseph was imprisoned though he was innocent because of the power of his master’s wife.
- Uriah was deceived and murdered through the scheming of King David and his abuse of power.
- Elijah ran for his life out of fear of the power possessed by of King Ahab and his wife Jezebel.
- Jesus was sentenced to death by a structure of power (the Sanhedrin) that conveniently passed judgment on the incarnate God—their Messiah.
- The Church in Jerusalem experienced such severe persecution that the Christians fled save the Apostles.
- John was banished to the island of Patmos among criminals, waiting for his coming execution.

The Devil, throughout history, has been deeply committed to waging war against humanity. He hates God and the people of God. He will do anything and use every means available to bring about spiritual blindness and alienation from God. He can, of course, harm the body, but what he can do to the souls of people as he attempts to keep them in spiritual blindness and lead them step by step to hell is far more serious. The Devil has used and is still using:

- Demonization
- Cultures
- Laws and basic beliefs
- Structures of power
- Thought life

Are we aware of his deceptions and not only his open confrontations? Are we sensitive to God as we read the Scriptures to discover what is on his heart and to stand alongside him in our warfare against the Devil?

#### 4. Ethnocentrism or Tribalism

Jesus began his public ministry as he entered the synagogue in Nazareth and was given the scroll of Isaiah to read. He looked for Isaiah chapter 61 and read the first two verses and stopped abruptly in the middle of the second verse. In this passage, Jesus saw his calling; and from that first day, he was in open confrontation with the structures of power of his day (Luke 4:16 - 30). They were so furious with him from the first day that they wanted to kill him. He did not read the continuation of verse 2 which says: "*and the day of vengeance of our God.*" The Jews in Nazareth wanted God to inflict his vengeance on the Gentiles.

In Ezekiel 34, we see God the Father confronting the structures of power among his people in Ezekiel's day. He confronted the shepherds who only took care of themselves, eating curds, clothing themselves with wool and slaughtering the choicest animals, but not caring for the flocks themselves (Ezekiel 34:2 - 3). Then God said about the shepherds, "*I am against the shepherds and will hold them accountable for my flock. I will remove them from tending the flock. I will rescue my flock from their mouths.*" (Ezekiel 34:10).

Then, in the same chapter, God confronted another structure of power—the fat and the strong sheep promising to destroy them (Ezekiel 34:16). He went on to say: "*Is it not enough for you to feed on the good pasture? Must you also trample on the rest of your pasture with your feet? Is it not enough for you to drink clear water? Must you also muddy the rest with your feet? Must my flock feed on what you have trampled and drink what you have muddied with your feet?*" (Ezekiel 34:18 - 19). As he looks at his globe, God sees the whole world, not just his adopted children. He is not ethnocentric. His map does not put Europe, Africa nor the USA at the center of the world. In his map, there is no prejudice and partiality.

He looks at his adopted children with compassion and love, whether they are in Sudan, Chad, Nigeria, Mongolia, Iraq, Indonesia, California, Singapore, England, or Argentina. His Western children are not of superior value just because they have more of the resources of the globe. If he would side with any, it will be with the poor, the destitute and the oppressed (Isaiah 10:1 - 2; Isaiah 26:4 - 6).

He is involved deeply in spiritual warfare against the Devil and his principalities. In this war, where do we stand? I believe that many Christians in the West stand alongside God and give very generously to his work around the globe. I believe that some Americans such as Bill Gates, are among of the most generous people in the world. Yet, as citizens of the industrialized nations, we should still ask ourselves some important questions: When we have the attitude that the world owes us a living and we give in to greed and materialism, are we not the fat and the strong sheep that trample the rest of the pasture with our feet? Are we the sheep that go for the clear water to drink and muddy the rest with our feet? Do we consider it to be normal that the poor, the destitute and the oppressed must eat what we trample and drink what we have muddied with our feet?

May God have mercy on us, citizens of the privileged nations. May our eyes be opened to see where we as Christians are in this spiritual warfare. May God help us to be the light and salt in our nations and may he protect us from becoming like the Pharisees to whom Jesus said: *“Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You give a tenth of your spices—mint, dill and cumin. But you have neglected the more important matters of the law—justice, mercy, and faithfulness. You should have practiced the latter, without neglecting the former. You blind guides! You strain out a gnat but swallow a camel”* (Matthew 23:23 - 24).

### **Possible Applications**

Could we be tempted to be so occupied with one strand of the rope of the spiritual warfare that we miss out on the rest? Could we be so concerned with firmly closing the front door against Satan that we forget to close the back door and the side windows?

- 1) As you read the Bible, look for the various strands in the rope of spiritual warfare and identify them. So far, we have covered four strands; and in the next chapter, we will deal with the fifth strand—our thought life.
- 2) As you read the newspaper or listen to the news, stay alert and observe how our enemy, the Devil, is involved in events and happenings around the world. Identify the various strands in the rope of his war against humanity.
- 3) According to Noebel, there are more than 100 million Christians in the United States, in contrast to about 7 million secular humanists. Yet the 7 million are involved and strategically positioned to influence the whole of the United States of America. How can we be involved and not resign ourselves to remain marginal?
- 4) As we read the Bible, we need to learn to perceive issues from God’s perspective rather than from a narrow ethnocentric perspective.
- 5) If you are in a position of authority, realize the impact you could make by being an instrument of God and refusing to allow yourself to abuse your power.
- 6) When I live in a country where the government tends to be an evil structure of power, I have the responsibility to vote when that is possible and yet continue to view the authority from a Romans 13:1 - 7 perspective without grumbling.
- 7) As westerners, are we living our lives as fat and strong sheep and letting the rest of the world reap the consequences of our choices when it comes to climate change?
- 8) As you face daily battles, remember to apply James’ simple formula for victory (James 4:7):

Condition #1: Submit to God.

Condition #2: Resist the Devil.

The result: The Devil will flee.

The issue is not how spectacular and complex our strategies are but to *whom* we are submitting and what authority and power are at his disposal.

## CHAPTER 8

### SATANIC INFLUENCE THROUGH THOUGHT LIFE

#### The Analogy of War

In a major war, not only will the army be involved but also the air force, the navy and all the other branches of the military.

If we use this analogy for our war with our enemy the Devil, then we realize that the scope of this war is overly broad and demands that we be alert to the various methods the Devil may use in his attacks. He hates us, and in his attacks, he is waging a total war against us with the intention of destroying us.

In modern war, if some airplanes are downed or if some destroyers are sunk or even if a few cities or towns are occupied by enemy parachute troops, that is not the end. There will always be hope for recovery, picking up the pieces and getting ready for the next battle.

However, if our intelligence is infiltrated and if our leadership is confused, then we invite defeat.

In our warfare with our enemy, the Devil, we have talked about confronting him in several areas where he attacks:

- Demonization
- Cultures
- Laws and basic beliefs
- Structures of power

But his greatest attack on us will be in thought life. This is equivalent to the “operations center” or “the situation room” where all the top leaders are gathered. If that group of decision-makers is infiltrated, then the Enemy is well ahead.

In our warfare with the Devil, we find that he gives great attention to bombarding our minds with his, lies, thoughts and ideas. This is not surprising because we filter all our ideas, thoughts, and basic assumptions through our minds. Our minds contain the volitional aspects of our being, yet at the same time our minds are extremely capable of self-deception. Ego defense mechanisms, such as rationalization, projection, compensation, and identification are but an indication of what the mind is capable of doing to achieve peace even through self-deception. So, the mind, I believe, is the equivalent of the operations center or the situation room and therefore, it is the primary target of the Enemy.

## The Sin Living in Me

In his first epistle, John writes, *“Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For everything in the world—the cravings of sinful man (lust of the flesh), the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does (the pride of life)—comes not from the Father but from the world”* (1 John 2:15 - 16).

The word *“world”* has several meanings; but in this text, it means the evil system organized under the dominion of Satan, which is based on lust and pride.

The lust of the flesh means the desires of our sinful and fallen natures. These are the earthly qualities which incite us to respond to temptations.

The lust of the eyes means the tendency to be captivated by outside stimuli that focus on the appearance of things rather than on their real value.

The pride of life is the arrogance regarding one’s external circumstances, material possessions, abilities, academic background, success and so on, of wanting to outshine others in luxurious living, achievements, and accomplishments.

In Genesis 2, we have a record of how man was created in the Garden of Eden; and in chapter 3, we have a record of the Fall. Since then, man has been in a state of depravity. Paul describes the condition of humanity by pointing out that *“just as sin entered the world through one man and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned”* (Romans 5:9 - 12).

So, in our fallen nature, we have inherited and are infected with something which is far worse and deadlier than the HIV virus. This “virus” is called original sin, and we are born with it. I believe this “virus” is in essence, our doubting the goodness and power of God and having a desire to rebel against him. When we do not repent it leads us to treat God with contempt and even with defiance.

Life’s experiences do not cause this “virus” but they can nourish it. It is like an influenza virus in my body that causes me to have a sore throat. If I am feeling very cold, the cool temperature does not cause my sore throat, but it nourishes and strengthens the virus that causes my sore throat.

Sometimes the “virus” (doubting God’s goodness and power) is dormant, and other times it is active. As long as I am in the flesh, I will always have this “virus.” When the “virus” is active, I find myself wanting to be very much in control of my life. It is much easier to put my trust in things I can control than to depend on God and to trust him. God describes his people by declaring, *“My people have committed two sins. They have forsaken me, the spring of living water, and have dug their own cisterns, broken cisterns that cannot hold water”* (Jeremiah 2:13).

Jesus offered that great invitation to thirsty and longing people to come to him and drink (John 7:37). I could be very thirsty and yet reject his offer when the “virus” is active.



No research can be done to arrive at a cure for this “virus.” We are all infected with it, and we must live with it as long as we are alive on this earth.

Yet we can do something about this “virus.” As we respond in faith and obedience to the Word of God and as we cooperate with the Holy Spirit who dwells within us, the “virus” could become more dormant, but it never dies as long as we are alive. At other times, we experience flares ups of the “virus” within us, making the struggle against sin even more difficult. Paul in Romans 7 describes this struggle: *“I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do. It is no longer I myself who do it but sin living in me . . . What I do is not the good I want to do. No, the evil I do not want to do, this I keep on doing”* (Romans 7:15 - 20). Again, Paul describes this struggle when he says, *“Live by the Spirit and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature. For the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature”* (Galatians 5:16 - 17). We are set free from penalty of sin, since Jesus paid for it in full. Furthermore, as believers we are set free from the power of sin, although we are still prone to sin.

In the earlier sections of this book, we talked about demonization and Satanic influence in cultures, laws, basic beliefs and structures of power. In all of these, it could appear to us that the Devil attacks from the outside, and we humans are like this universe exposed to good and evil powers that are competing to control us. Are we victims in this cosmic war or are we more like *agents* being deeply involved?

In this section, “The Sin Living in Me,” we see how we are agents far more than being victims. We experience the struggle in great intensity because the “virus” is living in us. We go down in a spiral when we surrender our thought life to our sinful nature and thus go deeper into the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life. If we were not involved as cooperating agents, we could have said, “The Devil made me do it,” and we could have blamed the Devil for our sin.

As we proceed in this chapter, we see the interaction between the sin living in me and my thought life.

The Devil has infected and polluted our cultures, laws, basic beliefs and structures of power. Thus, he is the prince of this world. Furthermore, he is aware of our weak spots and areas of vulnerability and thus exposes our minds to stimuli that arouses in us sinful thoughts, motives and desires. The Devil knows that our minds are deceitful and desperately corrupt. Therefore, he exposes us to lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes and the pride of life. One of his primary targets is the “operations center” or the “situation room” of our lives namely, our minds.

### **Looking at History**

With Adam and Eve, the Devil attacked their minds with the question, “Did God say?” As their “operations center” or “situation room” was infiltrated, they lost their:

- Harmony with God.

- Harmony with nature.
- Harmony with self.
- Harmony with one another.

That battle for Adam and Eve was a catastrophe.

With Abraham, perhaps the most severe battle he ever had with the enemy was the three days' trip to sacrifice his son, Isaac. The Devil could have bombarded his mind with questions such as these:

- At our age, how could we have another child?
- How could God fulfill his promises to me if Isaac dies?
- What if God does not raise him from the dead?
- Did God really ask me to sacrifice Isaac or am I imagining that I heard God?
- What will I say to Sarah when I go back home alone?

These must have been tough days for Abraham; but he brought joy to God's heart as he must have brought his thoughts into submission to God.

As Joseph was put in prison, he could have been bombarded by the Devil with agonizing thoughts such as these:

- Should I have committed adultery and escaped the rage of that sensual woman?
- Where is God? Has he forsaken me? Doesn't he know that I am innocent?
- Who will ever find me in Egypt? I am finished.
- Was I stupid to think that I had a special calling?
- My brothers, who were supposed to honor me according to the dream, wanted to kill me!?
- Is my father alive? Does he care? Can he do anything to help me?

As far as we know, Joseph did well in this battle.

As the people of God walked around the walls of Jericho for seven days, their war with the Devil could have been more difficult than ordinary human battles. Perhaps they were bombarded by the Devil with thoughts such as these:

- What Joshua claimed God told him sounds ridiculous. What if Joshua is wrong this time?
- We are going to be ridiculed by all the nations who will hear about this fiasco.
- I wish some of our leaders would challenge Joshua and help him come to his senses.
- Well, we have walked around Jericho for seven days, and this is the fifth lap on the seventh day, and yet I cannot see one crack in the wall. I have been a fool. I better stop walking and insulting my intelligence.

The people of God won this major battle. They controlled their thought lives and continued walking around Jericho, and when their obedience was completed, the walls came tumbling down.

We could have a long list of illustrations from the Old and the New Testaments of how the Devil could have attacked the thought life of the men and women of God. But let us conclude this section by considering David after his sin with Bathsheba. Perhaps the Devil put thoughts like these into his mind:

- I am the king, and I deserve some pleasures in life. God will not deprive me of these.
- Hard luck, she got pregnant. Why didn't God prevent that pregnancy?
- To be humiliated in public will be a catastrophe. I must think of a way of dealing with this problem without ruining my reputation.
- I will work out a plan where her husband will assume that the child is his, and everyone's reputation will stay intact.

We all know the result of David's surrender to the Devil in the important area of the "situation room" of his life. No wonder the Devil controlled him for several months. Only when David was willing to obey God in his thought life, did he finally repent. As he started to submit his thoughts once more to the obedience of God, his downward spiral ended, and he began moving back to God.

### **Foundations for Warfare**

According to Deuteronomy 28:1, 2 and 15, the passing grade with God is not 60%, nor 70%, nor 90% not even 99% but 100%. God's people were told in that chapter that if they *fully* obeyed God, then they would experience his blessings. On the other hand, if they did *not fully* obey God in all his commandments, they would then experience many curses. Who can fully obey all his commandments? There are 613 laws in the Old Testament. Adam and Eve had a hard time obeying one law. The only person in history who fully obeyed all God's commandments and met his absolute demands is Jesus Christ. He is the only one who has earned the 100% passing grade. All of us have

earned an F grade. I might compare my 65% grade with another person who earned only 42% grade and think that I am OK because I am not as bad as him. This is exactly how the Pharisee saw himself when he looked at the tax collector and congratulated himself for having a 65% grade and for not like that tax collector and sinner who earned only a 42% grade. Whether my grade is 65%, or 85% or 99%, my grade is still an F.

Here is the good news. On that important date when I had an encounter with Christ that transformed my life, a huge transaction took place. Jesus was accused with all my sin and with all my filth as he hung on that cross. He took upon himself my sin, every sin, past, present and future and as a result I was fully forgiven, and I was declared “Not Guilty.” My “book” that had a record of every sin that I have ever committed and will ever commit, was placed on Jesus as he hung on the cross (Revelations 20:11 - 15). But this is not the whole truth.

On that day when I had the transaction with God, Christ did not only take upon himself my sin, but he gave me his righteousness. He is the only one who has earned the 100% passing grade and he gave it to me. When God looks at me, he sees me as he sees Christ. From my head to my toes, I am wrapped all around with the robe of righteousness of Christ (Isaiah 61:10). I am declared “*Not Guilty*” and I am declared “*Righteous*.” There is nothing I can do to make God love me more and there is nothing I can do to make God love me less (Philip Yancey).

My foundation of spiritual warfare is to believe that there is *no condemnation* for those who are *in Christ Jesus* (Romans 8:1). My *actual* righteousness is what describes my daily living, and my *declared* righteousness is what God sees when he looks at me. I need to live daily based on believing what God sees, rather than what I see.

People often use Ephesians 6:10 - 18 as key passage in Scripture on spiritual warfare, and yet, this passage is frequently taken out of its context.

The church in Ephesus was mostly made up of Gentile converts along with some Jewish converts. When Paul wrote to this healthy church, he was addressing them as a new society. In the first three chapters, he focused on their tremendous privilege of being the children of God. He prayed that their eyes would be opened to realize the greatness of their hope, their power, their riches in Christ and the grace that was lavished upon them. Then he spoke of the tremendous unity that can exist among Christians, whether they come from a Gentile or Jewish background. What Paul wanted to communicate to the Ephesians in the first three chapters was that they, as a new people, are already seated in the heavenly places. They are in Christ at the summit, and they are children of God, not just his servants or slaves. A key statement that could summarize the first three chapters is this—*realize who you are in Christ*.

Chapters 4:1 – 6:9 deals with the second major issue in this epistle. It has to do with the kind of behavior and the kind of relationships that God’s children in this new society should have. The key words in this section are “*live*” and “*relate*” as God’s children.

In the third section of this epistle, Ephesians 6:10 - 18 (a key text on spiritual warfare), we see a message strongly connected to the rest of the epistle. The key thought in this section is “make a *stand* and do not let the Devil deceive you on who you are in Christ.”

Paul is saying to the Ephesians: “You are a new society; you are the precious and privileged children of God; therefore, live and relate to one another and to the lost around you as children of God, and do not let the Devil deceive you. Put on the whole armor of God so that you will continue to realize who you truly are and to live accordingly.”

It seems to me that although the Devil could have attacked the Ephesians in various ways and manners, Paul’s greatest concern for them was their thought life since that is where the Devil, along with the “rulers, authorities, powers of this dark world and spiritual forces of evil,” were focusing their attacks. They were after the “operations’ center” or the “situation room” of the Ephesians. Therefore, for the Ephesians to succeed in this warfare, they did not need to occupy new territory. Christ had bound the “strong man” and had already occupied the territory for them and positioned them on it. All they needed to do was not give up any territory to the Devil. That is good news! Waging war with that perspective gives God’s children a tremendous advantage. For example, if I am struggling with insecurity in a social situation, what I need to do is to remember that I am God’s child and his ambassador, and then live according to who I am. I do not need new territory, but I need to live according to the territory that Christ has already given me. I should not try to be significant because I am already significant. God is my Dad and he appointed me as his ambassador. Therefore, I need to walk tall because of who I am in Christ.

Waging war with the perspective of being victors makes all the difference. Christ has stripped the spiritual powers of their weapons, displayed them in public as his trophies of victory, leading them in captive chains tied to his chariot (Colossians 2:15). Paul used this vivid military language to describe what happened in the unseen reality, the invisible world. The mighty spirits which once held men in their “dominion of darkness” (Colossians 1:13) are now reduced to bound captives. We are now invited to live by faith, trusting that we are already seated in the heavenly places, and to wage war from that perspective.

Another key passage on spiritual warfare is 2 Corinthians 10:3-6: “*For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to tear down strongholds. We demolish arguments (imagination, false pride, deceptive arguments, sophistries) and every pretension (high thing, proud obstacle, wall-imposing deference, arrogance) that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ. And we will be ready to punish every act of disobedience, once your obedience is complete.*”

What are the strongholds that we need to tear down? Paul answers this question by pointing out that these strongholds are arguments and pretensions that stand as obstacles, preventing God’s children from knowing him or being deeply and most

intimately related to him. These strongholds of the Devil, his fortress, are basically *thoughts that bombard the minds* of God's children. The challenge for us is to engage in spiritual warfare by arrest or bringing into captivity every thought and presenting it handcuffed to Jesus. If we continue in this warfare, like God's people continued walking around the walls of Jericho for seven days and on the seventh day seven times until our obedience is complete, we too will see the strongholds (arguments and pretensions that are in our minds) come tumbling down.

Our spiritual warfare should be both offensive and defensive. God calls us to be holy in the realm of our thought life. Therefore, rather than just waiting passively to defend our minds when we perceive we are attacked, we should rigorously seek to be sanctified and being set apart for God. This involves determination to offensively bring every thought into obedience and to present it as a captive to Christ.

In the realm of the *structures of power*, we should be involved in both defensive and offensive spiritual warfare. We need to be alert and sensitive to detect evil in ourselves and outside. We need to carry the sword of the Spirit—the Word of God—and follow in the footsteps of the prophets of the Old Testament. We need each in our own sphere of influence, courageously challenge the system and dare to be the conscience of our nations. We need to be involved participants rather than mere spectators.

The same applies to the areas of *culture, laws and basic beliefs*. Rather than being satisfied with allowing our cultures to erode and disintegrate, we should be at the forefront of the battle of preserving and upholding God's truth.

The same is true within the area of *demonization*. Rather than being terrified, fascinated and amazed by the stories we hear and being satisfied to be mere spectators, we should instead remember that the Devil is defeated and mortally wounded and therefore dare to cast out demons or at least introduce the demonized to someone with faith and experience in this area. All authority is given to Christ, and he is with us always.

We should be on the offensive and not only on the defensive. What makes the difference in our spiritual warfare is the frame of reference that we have. Are we fighting from a pre- or from a post-D-day perspective? Do we perceive ourselves as nobodies and weaklings or do we perceive ourselves as conquerors and God's ambassadors? With what frame of reference do we pray, act and think?

### **A Personal Illustration**

When we lived in Egypt, we found that many Christians (believers and nominals) were bombarded by the Devil with thoughts that resulted in resentment and bitterness against Muslims. Various things contributed to this, one of which was the call of the minaret.

Since the time of Muhammad, Muslims have followed the tradition of alerting people to the time of prayer five times a day—the first being at dawn. Although people nowadays have alarm clocks, the tradition continues with microphones and powerful loudspeakers placed on minarets. With calls of the minaret, and especially the one at dawn, many

nominal and born-again Christians in Egypt are captivated by satanic thoughts. I experienced them as well.

As I analyzed the way I thought, I found that my thoughts formed a chain of many links. When the first stimulus appeared (the call of the minaret at any time of the day—the first link in the chain), it was automatically followed by other links that became deeply engraved in my mind. The chain of my thoughts went as follows:

- 1) Hearing the call of the minaret.
- 2) This is the man who wakes me up at 5 a.m.
- 3) Do they have to use microphones and loudspeakers? Whoever wants to pray can use his alarm clock.
- 4) Muslims do this to frustrate us and to persecute us.
- 5) I hate them.
- 6) Lord, please give me love for Muslims.
- 7) Lord, please give me an opportunity to share the gospel with a Muslim this week.

The last link in the chain contained prayer. I doubt whether this prayer was answered because it was motivated by guilt and did not follow repentance.

Instead of being a captive to this chain, I cut it after the first link and built a new chain starting with the old link number one but adding brand-new links two through seven. The new chain looked something like this:

- 1) I hear the call to of the minaret.
- 2) Thank you, Lord, that in your providence you placed me in this country.
- 3) Father, in your sovereignty you allowed Muslims to be the majority.
- 4) Father, I wonder if this man and his family are going through some difficult times.
- 5) Help me to see this man and his family through your eyes.
- 6) Lord, please give me love for Muslims.
- 7) Lord, please give me an opportunity to share the gospel with a Muslim this week.

The last link in the new chain is identical to the last one in the previous chain. However, in the new chain, I believe that the prayers lifted to God were answered because they were based on compassion and on a clean mind.

As I worked on renewing my mind with the new chain several times each day, it became a part of my being.

Until that time, the mosques were not very close to our apartment. We could hear the call of the minarets coming from three mosques in the distance but were not loud enough to wake me up at dawn. But then the ground floor of a neighboring building fifty yards from our apartment was transformed into a mosque, and a huge loudspeaker was installed on the roof of the building. They chose to start operating the loudspeakers before sunrise on one of those mornings. I almost fell out of bed because of the shock of the loud noise.

In the following mornings, I found myself praying with the man as he gave the call:

God is great.  
God is one.  
Muhammad is the prophet of God.  
Get up and pray.  
Do good deeds to people.  
God is great.  
God is one.

For every statement except one, I could think of several verses from the Bible. I found myself not only praying with him but also praying for him. The hard part for me was the introductory statement that he made, "Get up to pray. Prayer is better than sleeping." I thought that this man was faithfully waking up early while I was not willing to get out from under the warm blankets to have a long quiet time with God. I no longer struggled because of my prejudice against Muslims but because of his statement, "Get up and pray. Prayer is better than sleeping." So, I asked God to forgive me for my laziness; and I prayed in bed, then went back to sleep.

What a sense of liberation I experienced of being free of any bitterness or resentment towards Muslims. This thought with which the Devil bombarded me, I arrested, handcuffed, and brought it into captivity to Jesus Christ.

How are you doing these days in your "operations center" or "situation room"? Who is in control? What thoughts come to your mind when it is idle? Are you engaged in holy warfare to keep your mind clean?

May God help us to stand and put on the whole armor of God offensively and defensively.



## CHAPTER 9

### HOW THE DEVIL WAGED WAR AGAINST JESUS

In preparing this material, I read the Gospels to observe how the Devil waged his war against Jesus. The intensity of the warfare varied according to the situation, but what stood out to me was the intensity of the warfare when it came to thought life and the continued harassment by the Devil through structures of power. The following is a summary of what I found in the Gospel of Luke.

#### 1. Demonization

As far as I could tell, there were five incidents of demonization in Luke. For sure, Christ must have felt pain as he saw these individuals crippled and controlled by Satan.

- Luke 4:33 - 36. Jesus cast the demons out of a demonized man in the synagogue.
- Luke 8:1 - 2. Mary Magdalene had seven demons. Jesus cast them out, and she became one of his faithful followers. Furthermore, she, along with a few other women, was on his support or donors' team.
- Luke 8:26 - 36. Jesus cast out the demons that were in Legion and permitted them to enter the herd of pigs. Legion became an evangelist in the Ten Cities and in his hometown (Mark 5:20).
- Luke 11:14. The mute man spoke after Jesus cast the demon out.
- Luke 22:3 - 6. One of Jesus' own disciples, Judas, was demonized or controlled by Satan. Out of all the incidents of demonization, this must have brought the greatest pain to Jesus.

#### 2. Cultures, Laws and Basic Beliefs

It is usually hard to distinguish culture from worldview and basic beliefs because they are closely interrelated. So, we are looking at these two influences together.

- Luke 4:16 - 29. As Jesus read Isaiah 61:1-2 in the synagogue, instead of making the focus of this message a woe to the Gentiles as expected, he turned it into a confrontation with the Jews. Their Jewish culture and basic beliefs required every teacher to affirm their prejudice. Jesus refused to fit into that mold. This made the Jews furious, and they wanted to kill him.
- Luke 5:21 - 24. Jesus healed the paralyzed man and forgave his sins. Jesus could sense the Satanic vibrations as he saw the displeasure of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, especially regarding the forgiveness of sins. Jesus did not fit into their basic beliefs system.

- Luke 6:1 - 2, 6:6 - 11, 13:14 - 17, 14:1. In these four incidents Jesus experienced Satanic resistance in people regarding his teaching about the Sabbath. Instead of coming to Jesus with a teachable attitude desiring to learn from the Messiah, the Pharisees and other religious leaders came to observe him and “catch him in the act” of a theological error. The Devil most certainly delighted in their trivialities, oral laws and legislations regarding the Sabbath.

Can you imagine the pain that Jesus must have experienced as he encountered these fanatic and dogmatic religious leaders?

- Luke 5:30 - 32, 7:39, 15:2, 19:5 - 7. In four further incidents, the culture and the basic beliefs of the Pharisees, the teachers of the law, the Jewish crowds and even his own disciples did not correspond with his compassion for the tax collectors, sinners and Samaritans. Jesus must have sensed the Satanic spirit of ethnocentrism and self-righteousness of these people and he must have been grieved by the hardness of their hearts.
- Luke 5:33, 11:37 - 38. In these two passages, the Pharisees were critical of Jesus and his disciples because they did not adhere to the oral law and the Jewish regulations regarding fasting and ceremonial washings. Jesus and his disciples must have been continually annoyed by the Satanic vibes from spectators who were critically observing them to prove them wrong. It must have been like walking in a mine field (Luke 10:25, 29).
- Luke 10:10 - 16. Jesus, on seeing the lack of response when he preached in Jewish cities, must have sensed how Satan hardened the hearts of these religious people with self-righteousness. In agony, he compared them to Sodom and other cities that did not have the privileges that these people had. Truly, the Devil blinds the eyes and hearts of people, and that must have broken the heart of Jesus.

### **3. Structures of Power**

In this area, Jesus was continually attacked by the Devil. The attacks took different shapes and forms, even to the degree of threatening his life.

- Right after his birth, Herod the Great wanted to kill Jesus (Matthew 2:7 - 8, 16 - 17). So, he sent his soldiers to Bethlehem to kill every baby who was less than two years old. Jesus was smuggled out to Egypt to escape the tyranny of this autocrat.
- In Nazareth, the people of the synagogue wanted to push Jesus from a high cliff and kill him (Luke 4:16 – 29). Then, after Jesus healed the man with the withered hand on a Sabbath, the Pharisees and the teachers of the law began to discuss with one another what they might do to him (Luke 6:6 - 11).

- After Jesus cast out the demon from the mute man, some powerful people started spreading rumors about Jesus that he himself was demonized and that he was casting out demons with the power of Satan. It must have been extremely difficult for the Holy One to be accused of being demonized (Luke 11:15 - 16).
- In Luke 11:53-54, the Pharisees and teachers of the law schemed to present Jesus to the religious court, while Herod was scheming to kill him (Luke 13:31 - 32).
- In Luke 19:38 - 40, Jesus was advised strongly by some of the Pharisees to rebuke his disciples for recognizing him as the Messiah. At the Temple, the chief priests and the elders were belligerent as they questioned him about his authority (Luke 20:1 - 2). Then the teachers of the law and the chief priests looked for a way to arrest him, so they sent spies who pretended to be honest people to catch him in something he might say (Luke 20:19 - 22). Then the Sadducees wanted to trap him with a theologically explosive question regarding the resurrection (Luke 20:27).
- By the time of the Passover, the Devil's attacks became more blatant. The chief priests and the teachers of the law were searching for a way to finish him off (Luke 22:1 - 2). He was arrested as if he were a criminal (Luke 22:47, 52). Then the soldiers mocked him and beat him (Luke 22:63 - 65).
- Jesus was then presented to three structures of power: the Jewish council (Luke 22:66 - 71), Pilate (Luke 23:1 - 5, 13) and Herod (Luke 23:7 - 11). Through all three, the Devil was radiating hate, pride and deception. Finally, even the mob who had seen Jesus heal, love and feed them cried out with demonic fervor, "Crucify him! Crucify him!" They chose Barabbas, a criminal, to be set free, wanting the Holy One to be executed instead (Luke 23:18 - 25).
- Perhaps the Devil thought that he had finally succeeded when Jesus was crucified (Luke 23).

#### **4. Thought Life**

Surely, it must have agonized Jesus to see his disciples half-hearted and slow to discern that he was the Messiah. He must have found it very difficult to see his disciples forsake him and Peter even deny Him. He must have also suffered as he was continually harassed by the religious and political leaders of his time. But the three most difficult struggles he had must have been at the Mount of Temptation, the Mount of Olives and on the cross.

- After 40 days of fasting, Jesus was confronted head-on by the Devil. The Devil tried to sow seeds of doubt regarding his identity, his needs, the Father's love for him and his own goals and means. But Jesus brought every thought under submission to make it obedient to God the Father (Luke 4:1 - 13).

- At the Mount of Olives, Jesus' agony was almost unbearable. He yearned for his disciples to be aware of what he was going through and to stand with him in prayer, but they were sleepy. So, "*being in anguish, he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground*" (Luke 22:44). He wrestled intensely against the Satan, and his agony must have been indescribable (Luke 22:39 – 46).
- Finally, as he hung on the cross, taking the blame for our filth and sin, he must have sensed a black cloud separating him from his Father. He cried out to his Father asking, "Why have you forsaken me?" His heart must have been torn with sorrow as his mind was attacked and tormented (Luke 23:32 – 43).

### **But That Was the Beginning**

Jesus went all the way, and he refused to succumb to the Devil's suggestion of choosing the easy way out. Having completed his obedience to the Father, he died on that cross. His friends buried him, but then, on Sunday morning, the sting of death was broken—Jesus rose from the dead! The biggest blow that the Devil ever experienced was on that Sunday morning. The Devil was mortally wounded. Hallelujah!

## CHAPTER 10

### CONCLUSION

What a privilege we have as children of God that we can look back at that great historical event! We can remember and try to comprehend what was accomplished on that great weekend. Sunday was Victory Day. Therefore, Christians can live with a post-victory perspective despite the blood, the bullets and the pain. What a difference it will make to our spiritual warfare if we concentrate on God's victory! What confidence we can enjoy as we know that the strong and deceitful serpent was mortally wounded about two thousand years ago! What a joy we can experience when we remember that all authority is given to Jesus who has promised that he will be with us always!

At the same time, we need to remember that our enemy hates God and hates us. His goal is to destroy us, and so he attacks us in all our vulnerable openings, not just the front door. The front door varies from one individual to another. My front door is anything to which I am vulnerable.

Therefore, we need to be careful to put on the whole armor of God and close firmly every door and window against our enemy. For what does it profit us if we fortify the front door, only to leave the back door and side windows wide open!

Perhaps the Devil in his deception explodes a great deal of firecrackers in front of our main door, all while he sneaks in through the window and comes right in, stands next to us and congratulates us for our great fortification of our front door. May God give us wisdom and insights to recognize evil in all its forms and hate it.

As you read your Bible, I would like to suggest that you take notes of the texts that help you to gaze at God and only glance at the Devil. Memorize some of these passages, delight in God and worship him.

Make notes of the passages in the Bible that clearly identify the various entrances through which the Devil could attack us, such as:

- Demonization
- Culture
- Laws and basic beliefs
- Structures of power
- Thought life

Identify which one of those is your front door. Fortify yourself with God, giving special attention to your particular front door, but stay alert to the back door and to the windows.

In a Sunday school class where I spoke on spiritual warfare, a young lady asked me privately, "Is depression caused only by demonization?" My response was, "No, there could be various causes for depression:

- 1) Unconfessed sin (Psalm 32).
- 2) Wrong basic beliefs.
- 3) Chemistry of the brain.
- 4) Demonization.

The first cause is corrected through repentance; the second through counseling; the third through medication; and the fourth through casting out of demons.

As she heard my answer, with tearful eyes, she gave a sigh of relief. She had been told by a Christian leader that since she has depression, she must be demonized. After she heard his statement, she lived in tormenting mental pain in addition to her depression.

Praise be to you, O God, who chose me (say your name) before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in your sight. In love, you predestined me (say your name) to be adopted as your child through Jesus Christ.

If you are for me (say your name), who can be against me? You who did not spare your own Son but gave him up for us all, how will you not also, along with him graciously give me all things?

Lord, I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers (including the Devil), neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate me from your love.

For from you, and through you, and to you are all things. To you be the glory forever. Amen.

## **Appendix A... Daniel 10**

### **Courage in the Unseen Battle**

#### **Mark Bates**

Formerly, Senior Pastor at Village Seven Presbyterian Church in Colorado Springs.  
Currently, Senior Leader in Mission to the World

#### **Introduction**

I had lunch with a friend who was, until recently, pastoring another church in Colorado. The church was a growing congregation of nearly 400, discipling people and impacting its community. Conflict arose among the leaders of the church. Today, he is out of job and the church is less than 100 people. It all happened so fast it would make your head spin.

In the neighboring city to the north of his church is another church that was in our denomination. The pastor who planted that church resigned due to an inappropriate relationship with a woman in the church. The congregation was devastated. To the south is another church that once was growing and dynamic. The pastor left the denomination over theological issues. A few months later, he left his wife. Last I heard, he no longer claims to be a Christian.

About the same time, I received an email from another friend. It told story after story of a number of men no longer in ministry. One had an affair. Another resigned due to drug addiction. A man who pastored one of the largest churches in Florida, took his own life amidst allegations of drug use, drunkenness and abusive behavior.

These types of things do not only happen with ministers. Nearly every week, I hear of families torn apart by bitterness, anger, or infidelity. There are countless people who once were passionate about their faith and now are apathetic, caught up in careers, hobbies, and the endless pursuit of wealth or accomplishment.

We have forgotten that we are in a war. We are living in a battlefield disguised as Mayberry. Because we do not see the guns, tanks, or planes flying overhead, we have bought the enemy's lie that there is no enemy, that we are safe.

In Daniel 10, God opens the curtain for us so that we can look into the heavens and see what is really going on. We get a glimpse of the battle that is raging all around us. God does not show us these things to frighten us, but to awaken us so that we might be equipped and prepared for the battle before us.

As the scene opens in Daniel 10, Daniel is an old man. He has spent the previous three weeks in prayer, seeking an understanding of what God is doing with his people and seeking God's blessing for them. As he stands along the bank of the Tigris River, God shows up. Daniel gets a glimpse of the beauty and terror of God and it nearly kills him. The vision is so overpowering that Daniel actually passes out. An angel revives him and then speaks these words to him. Let us pick it up at verse 11:

## Daniel 10:11-21

*<sup>11</sup>And he said to me, “O Daniel, man greatly loved, understand the words that I speak to you, and stand upright, for now I have been sent to you.” And when he had spoken this word to me, I stood up trembling. <sup>12</sup>Then he said to me, “Fear not, Daniel, for from the first day that you set your heart to understand and humbled yourself before your God, your words have been heard, and I have come because of your words. <sup>13</sup>The prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me twenty-one days, but Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, for I was left there with the kings of Persia, <sup>14</sup>and came to make you understand what is to happen to your people in the latter days. For the vision is for days yet to come.” <sup>15</sup>When he had spoken to me according to these words, I turned my face toward the ground and was mute. <sup>16</sup>And behold, one in the likeness of the children of man touched my lips. Then I opened my mouth and spoke. I said to him who stood before me, “O my lord, by reason of the vision pains have come upon me, and I retain no strength. <sup>17</sup>How can my lord's servant talk with my lord? For now no strength remains in me, and no breath is left in me.” <sup>18</sup>Again one having the appearance of a man touched me and strengthened me. <sup>19</sup>And he said, “O man greatly loved, fear not, peace be with you; be strong and of good courage.” And as he spoke to me, I was strengthened and said, “Let my lord speak, for you have strengthened me.” <sup>20</sup>Then he said, “Do you know why I have come to you? But now I will return to fight against the prince of Persia; and when I go out, behold, the prince of Greece will come. <sup>21</sup>But I will tell you what is inscribed in the book of truth: there is none who contends by my side against these except Michael, your prince.”*

### 1. The reality of the battle

This chapter opens our eyes to the unseen world of spiritual powers, to the world of angels and demons. Despite popular myths and wonderful Christmas movies, angels are not people who have died and gone to heaven. They do not have to earn their wings. Rather, angels are created beings, made by God to serve Him. They are both glorious and powerful, but they are not almighty.

Throughout the Bible, we find that angels serve as messengers of God. In fact, that is what the word “angel” means. Satan was originally an angel who rebelled against God. Demons are the angelic forces who sided with him.

Yet, besides being messengers, it seems that the angelic beings—both good and evil—are patrons and guardians of communities and nations, and even individuals. We have an oblique reference to this in the Old Testament book of Deuteronomy. In chapter 32, we read that God gave the nations their inheritance, when he divided all mankind, he set up boundaries for the peoples according to the number of the “sons of God.” The term “sons of God” most likely refers to angels. So, it seems that there are angels who are assigned to different nations.<sup>i</sup> Not only that, but God even assigns them to protect His people. In Psalm 91, we learn that God has commanded His angels to guard His people in all their ways.

In this chapter, one angel is speaking. He does not identify himself, but it quite possibly is Gabriel, who has already shown up on the book of Daniel. He tells us of



another angel named Michael. whom he calls Daniel's prince, that is, he is responsible for the care of Daniel. In chapter 12, we learn that Michael is responsible for the people of God.

Angels are part of the heavenly hosts, which means, they are in God's army. They are warriors. We learn from the New Testament that Michael is a great warrior. In the book of Jude, we learn that he fought with the devil over the body of Moses. In Revelation, he leads an army of angels against the demonic forces of Satan. So, Michael is a great warrior, possibly the greatest warrior among the heavenly host.

By the way, this might affect what you put on top of your Christmas tree. Often, people put these little girly angels on top of their trees. I doubt Michael or Gabriel think too much of that. If you want to put an angel on top of your tree, it should look more someone in Special Forces, than a feminine girl in a long, flowing dress, or, even worse, one of Raphael's flying babies. Just think of all the conversations it might start if you put a Rambo action figure on top of your tree!

Here we learn that the angel who is speaking, presumably Gabriel, and Michael, have been fighting against the prince of Persia and will later fight against the prince of Persia as well as the prince of Greece. So, just as Michael is Daniel's prince, or patron, these patrons of nations in the spiritual world as well. What this means is that behind the political, military powers of Persia and Greece stands these spiritual powers, the prince of Persia and the prince of Greece.

These two nations are particularly important to Daniel because the Persians were the ones who were in dominion over Israel. According to an earlier vision, Daniel knows that the Greeks will come later and will conquer and oppress the people of Israel. That means there are demonic forces at work behind these nations seeking to oppress and destroy the people of God, but Michael and this other angel are fighting to protect them.

That does not mean that Cyrus, the Persian emperor, or Alexander the Great, the Greek emperor, were demon possessed or that their nations were pure evil. Their heads didn't spin around like in *The Exorcist*. In fact, in Isaiah, God calls Cyrus his anointed (Isaiah 45:1). Alexander the Great's cultural accomplishments still impact our lives today. There was much that was good and beautiful in both the Greek and the Persian Empires. That would be true of all cultures and people because all people are made in God's image and all enjoy His common grace. So, we can celebrate that which is true and good and beautiful in the world while also recognizing that there is a spiritual battle that is going on.

This battle that Daniel hears about is the latest in the Great Battle that began back in Genesis. In Genesis 3:15, God said to the serpent (Satan), "*I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.*" From this verse, we learn that God promises to bring a Savior into the world, but that Satan will do everything he can to stop it. This great battle is described again for us at the end of the Bible, in Revelation 12, where the Serpent Dragon goes off to make war against the offspring of the woman, that is, those who hold to the testimony of Jesus.

This is a battle where the forces of evil oppose the forces of God. Satan is the leader of this rebellion. That is why three times in the Gospel of John, Jesus refers to Satan as the ruler of this world (John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11). In 2 Corinthians, Paul calls him “the god of this world” (2 Corinthians 4:4). As such, he has real power over the people of this world so that Paul says that he has blinded them (2 Corinthians 4:4) and, as we read in the book of Acts, that the people of this world are under his power (Acts 26:18). At one time, even those who are now Christians, were under his rule. In Ephesians 2:2, Paul says that, before coming to Christ, even those who are now Christians followed the course of this world and the prince of this world.

So, we discover along with Daniel that there is this unseen battle in the heavenlies that affects what happens here on earth. What makes this particularly intriguing is that this spiritual battle looks quite ordinary. It doesn’t look like a scene out of a horror movie. It looks like life. This spiritual battle in the heavenlies does not only impact the course of nations like Israel or Greece or Persia but impacts your life every single day.

So, what does this spiritual warfare look like for us today and how are we to engage in it?

Satan is out to destroy the church. Throughout the New Testament, God gives His people a glimpse of the various tactics Satan uses to bring harm to God’s people and God’s mission. These tactics can be put under four categories:

## **HINDERANCES TO THE MISSION**

Two examples of this are Matthew 16 and 1 Thessalonians 2.

- In Matthew 16, Jesus explains to His disciples how he must go to Jerusalem to suffer and die. Peter says to Him, “*Far be it from you, Lord. This shall never happen to you!*” Do you remember how Jesus responded? He said, “*Get behind me, Satan!*” It was not that Peter was demon possessed or a child of Satan. In fact, it seems that Peter was very well-intentioned. Yet, Jesus clearly says that Peter’s words are tools of Satan to keep him from going to the cross because Peter’s words were a temptation to forego the suffering that was essential to our salvation.
- In 1 Thessalonians 2:18, Paul says that their missionary efforts are being hindered because of Satan.

So spiritual warfare looks like any attempt to thwart the mission of God through temptation towards comfort, government obstruction, or any other challenge.

The second type of spiritual attack is false teaching.

## **FALSE TEACHING**

- In Revelation 2:9 and 3:9, Paul says that the false teachers who are trying to lead the Christians back into legalism are part of the “*synagogue of Satan.*”
- In 2 Corinthians 11:13-15, Paul talks about false teachers creeping in to the church and compares them to Satan who disguises himself as an angel of light.

- In Galatians 4:3-9 and Colossians 2:8, Paul speaks of the elemental spirits or elementary principles. He uses the same Greek word in both cases, *stoicheia*. Paul says that we return to slavery of these elementary spirits when we begin to believe and live as if our holiness depends on our keeping a bunch of man-made rules. He said that these things have the appearance of godliness but are actually spiritual slavery. I want you to let that sink in. The idea that you can become more loved by God, that you can be more holy through following a bunch of rules has the appearance of godliness but is a form of satanic attack. It is a type of spiritual warfare.

A third type of spiritual attack is suffering, and persecution designed to discourage the believer.

## **SUFFERING AND PERSECUTION**

- In 2 Corinthians 12:7, Paul refers to his suffering a messenger of Satan sent to harass him.
- In Luke 22:31, Jesus warns Peter that he will deny Him three times and says that Satan had asked to sift Peter like wheat. So, what does Satanic attack look like in this case? It is the pressure to deny Jesus out of fear of persecution or even what other people think of you.

## **TEMPTATION**

Here, the spiritual attack can be so subtle that we are prone to miss it.

- In Acts 5, Ananias and Sapphira, lie about donating the profits from the sale of their land to care for the poor. Peter says to them that it is because Satan has filled their heart. So, this temptation to greed or deceit is a satanic attack.
- In 1 Corinthians 7, Paul says that husbands and wives should not abstain from marital intimacy for long periods of time because they would be opening them up to satanic attack. That means sexual temptation, lust, pornography—all of this is a satanic attack on your soul. The reason Paul warns us of this danger is so that we will not put ourselves in dangerous situations where lust can take root. That same warning would apply to single people as well. Be on your guard. Protect yourself. Do not expose yourself unnecessarily to sin and temptation.
- In 1 Timothy 5:13-15, Paul says that those in the church who engage in gossip or who are busybodies are straying after Satan. Let that sink in. When you are a gossip or a busybody, you are being a satanic tool to attack the church.
- In 2 Corinthians 2:10-11, says when we forgive one another, rather than wallowing in anger and unforgiveness, that we are outwitting Satan, whom it seems uses our anger and lack of forgiveness in the church to hinder the work of God. Conversely, if you are you reluctant or unwilling to forgive, that is like walking into

the battlefield in your pajamas. You are a sitting duck for satanic attack which can injure you, your family, and the church of God.

I hope you are seeing a pattern here. Spiritual warfare does not look like a scene from a horror movie. Rather, satanic attack looks like that desire to hold a grudge or the temptation to gossip. A satanic attack does not come in the form of a man in a red suit carrying a pitchfork, but in the tender words of a young woman inviting you to her bed, an illicit website beckoning you to visit, a group of friends with whom you desire acceptance and do not want to be seen as uncool, unsophisticated, or, God-forbid, like one of those uptight religious people. Satanic attack can even be an appeal to be holy through rigid religious practices and fleshly attempts at holiness. All this to say, it rarely *appears* to be demonic. Even those who are being used by these spiritual forces are unaware. Yet, the Bible says these are the ways Satan attacks God's people.

So, how do you know you are under satanic attack? There is a simple test that you can do to find out. Take a deep breath in. Now let it out slowly. Did you do it? Here is the one sure sign you are under satanic attack: You are breathing. If you are not yet a Christian, Satan wants to keep you in bondage. If you are a Christian, he wants to weaken or destroy your faith and sideline you from the battle. You are never **not** under attack. That means you can never drop your guard. You can never take off your armor. You are always on the battlefield.

## **2. How to fight the battle**

From this chapter of Daniel, some have concluded that there are territorial spirits who seem to have dominion or at least influence in certain geographic regions and that we ought to pray against such spirits. There is quite a bit of literature on these sorts of "power encounters." Yet, while the Bible affirms that there is such a thing as demonic activity and that some spiritual powers may be affiliated with regions or nations, it is also important to see that "the Bible nowhere narrates, describes, or instructs us on how, or even whether, we are to engage these high-ranking territorial spirits." Even here in Daniel, Daniel never engages or prays against the spiritual enemies about which the celestial beings speak. He leaves those matters to God.<sup>ii</sup> As the book of Jude tells us later, that even Michael, the archangel, did not rebuke Satan directly but said, "May the Lord rebuke you." In the New Testament teaching on spiritual warfare, we do not have any instructions on naming the spirits or contending with them. Instead, we are told to do three things: a) Be aware, b) Be in prayer, and c) Believe the good news.

### **A. Be Aware**

The first and most obvious point is, we must be aware that we are in a battle. Daniel is not told these things merely for his own theological edification, but in order that Daniel—and we—might be aware of what is really going on.

In 1 Peter, Peter tells us to "prepare your minds for action, literally says, "*gird up the loins of your mind.*" To gird up your loins was a military expression. In the ancient world, they didn't wear shirts and pants, but long robes. These long robes were fine most of the time, but, when one was working in the field, or, even more importantly, when one was engaged in battle, these long robes could get in the way. So, when a soldier was preparing for battle, he would gird up his loins, that is, he would take his robe, pull it up,

and often tie it in his belt so that it would not hinder his movements. So, Peter is saying, we are in a battle and we need to prepare ourselves accordingly.

We are in the greatest danger when we do not realize we are in great danger. We are in the great danger when we think that we are confident in our own abilities and think we can handle sin and temptation. Like a soldier going in to battle, each day, we must be careful to protect ourselves and not put ourselves in unnecessarily dangerous situations.

That not only means that we must be aware of the dangers we have already discussed, but it also means we must be people of prayer.

## **B. Be in prayer**

Daniel was engaged in the battle in the heavenlies before he even knew there was a battle in the heavenlies. As we saw in chapter 9 and we see here in chapter 10, Daniel's prayers impact what is happening in the heavenly realm. What we see, then, is that what happens in the spiritual realm impacts what happens in the earthly realm and our prayers in the earthly realm impact what happens in the spiritual realm. Simply put, prayer matters. It matters far more than we realize.

Often, when I get together with men who have children, the conversation will turn to fatherhood. For men younger than me, the conversation is often about how to do it right. For those my age and older, it about regret for how we did it wrong. Parenting is important. It is important how you educate your children, disciple your children, and discipline your children. Yet, as important, and critical as those tasks are, none are as critical or as fruitful as praying for your children. The battle for the souls of your children will not be won so much by following the advice of the latest parenting manual as will be by your prayers. We are engaged in a spiritual battle. Therefore, we must use spiritual weapons.

Yet, the focus of Daniel's prayer is not for himself, or even for his family. He is praying for the restoration of Jerusalem and the people of God. That is, He is praying for the advancement of God's mission and God's glory, which is precisely what Jesus taught us to pray in the Lord's Prayer, "*Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.*" We engage in the spiritual battle when we pray for the advancement of God's kingdom.

## **C. Believe the good news**

The most critical thing we can do as we engage in the great spiritual battle, where we join the fight with angels and demons, is simply believe the gospel because Satan desires nothing more than you forget it.

It is interesting that, before telling Daniel anything about the battle, the first thing the angel says to Daniel is, "*You are greatly loved.*" As we become aware of the battle around us, the most important thing for us to remember is, in Christ, you are greatly loved. If you are loved by God, then no matter what else happens, you will be okay. When you fail, when you fall, when you succumb to the enemy's attacks, remember, you are loved.

The greatest spiritual attack that you will face is not persecution or temptation, but accusation. In Revelation 12:10, Satan is called "*the accuser of the brethren.*" He brings up the sins you have done, plies them to your conscience, and seeks to overwhelm you with guilt. He wants you to think that you are now no longer loved by God, or forgiven, or that you have a place in His service. That is how the elementary spirits seek to return you to slavery. They put the focus on your failures, your works, rather than Christ's work. I said that there was one more attack that Satan uses against us and it is this one. He wants you to look at your works rather than at Christ so that you will be discouraged.

For all of us who have fallen in battle, who have succumbed to the attacks of the enemy, this is so important for us to remember, lest we become slaves again. Our standing before God does not depend on our ability to withstand Satan's attacks, but depends on Christ and His victory alone.

Satan's weapon against you is guilt and shame over your own sin and failings. What he does not want you to believe is that Jesus has already taken away your guilt and shame. As Paul writes in Colossians 2, when Jesus died on the cross, he canceled out the record of our wrongdoing, and satisfied our debt. By doing this, Paul says, that Jesus "*disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him*" (Colossians 2:15).

In Luke 21, when Jesus tells Peter that he will betray Him, Jesus says to Peter, "*Satan demanded to have you, that he might sift you like wheat, but I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned again, strengthen your brothers.*"

Peter would flat out deny Jesus, not once, not twice, but three times. He would give in to the Satanic attack and betray Jesus when Jesus most needed a friend. Yet, despite his horrible failure, Jesus says, "*I have prayed for you,*" and then he gives him a mission, "*After you have fallen in battle, get up, return, and strengthen your brothers.*"

Satan will attack you. He will cause you to fall, but he cannot destroy you because Jesus has prayed for you. Even now, Jesus is at the right hand of the Father, interceding on our behalf.

So, when you fall and when you fail, when you are wounded in battle, do not despair. If you are in Christ, then Jesus has won the victory for you. Instead, rejoice that you are loved and get back in the fight.

## APPENDIX B

### REACHING YOUR OWN CONCLUSIONS

When it comes to the topic of spiritual warfare, each Christian tends to see her or his theological position on this subject to be the balanced position. Others who do not agree with him or with her are off-center and theologically unbalanced.

It is a worthwhile exercise to do a study and come up with your own convictions on the subject. Define your position of preference, then determine your area of tolerance. What theological views on this subject of spiritual warfare can you tolerate for the sake of love and unity in the Body of Christ, although these views are not your theological preference? Then draw the line between what you can tolerate and what is outside the area of your tolerance. In other words, what is the line outside of which, from your point of view, people have gone into heresy or unbiblical views?

It will be very limiting if we attempt to study the unseen reality and spiritual warfare without a broader overview of the signs and wonders in the Scriptures.

1. What is the major role of signs and wonders in the Old Testament and the New Testament? Do you see parallels between what was accomplished in the Exodus and on the cross?

Exodus 7:3	Exodus 10:1-2	Numbers 14:22
Exodus 3:20	Exodus 11:9-10	Deuteronomy 4:34
Exodus 8:23	Exodus 15:15	Deuteronomy 6:22
Deuteronomy 7:19	Deuteronomy 29:3	Psalms 135:9
Deuteronomy 26:8	Joshua 24:17	Jeremiah 32:21
Deuteronomy 28:45-46	Psalms 105:27	Acts 2:19-22
Other passages		

2. What is another important purpose of signs and wonders?

Deuteronomy 6:20-24  
Psalms 77:11, 15  
Psalms 105:5  
John 20:30-31

3. What are the dangers of signs and wonders?

- a) Are signs and wonders performed only by genuine Christians?

Exodus 7:8 - 8:18  
2 Thessalonians 2:9 - 10

Revelation 13

- b) Could signs and wonders have a deceptive force?

Deuteronomy 13:1 - 5  
Jeremiah 28

- c) Can signs and wonders be sought for wrong motives?

Matthew 12:38 - 45  
Matthew 16:1 - 4  
Mark 8:11 - 12  
Acts 8:9 - 24

From the above passages, what is the significance of Jonah being a sign?

- d) Can signs and wonders be performed by Christians living in disobedience and hypocrisy?

Matthew 7:2 1- 23  
1 Corinthians 12 - 14

4. When you buy a valuable painting, you would want to frame it with a good frame. The main function of the frame is to invite people to focus on the painting. If the frame competes with the painting, then it is a bad frame. In Jesus ministry, what is the "painting" and what is the "frame"?

Mark 1:14 - 15, 21, 35 - 39  
Mark 2:2, 13  
Mark 4:1  
Mark 6:1 - 2, 34

Mark 7:14  
Mark 8:31 - 34  
Mark 9:30 - 31

Mark 10:1  
Mark 12:1, 35  
Luke 10:20

5. What connection do you see between the signs and wonders performed by Jesus and his role as the promised Messiah who will bring the new order or the Messianic age?

Matthew 11:4 - 6  
Acts 2:22

6. By whom were signs and wonders in the post-resurrection period performed?

Acts 2:43  
Acts 14:3 and 15:2  
Acts 6:8

Acts 8:13  
Romans 15:19  
2 Corinthians 12:11 - 12

What is the significance of the abundance of signs and wonders in the New Testament time?



7. How do you see the purpose or limitations of signs and wonders in the following passages?

1 Corinthians 12  
1 Corinthians 13  
Galatians 3:5  
James 5:13 - 16

8. Power, according to Paul, was not associated with signs and wonders nor with evangelism. With what was it associated? What was Paul's consuming desire for the readers of this letter?

Romans 8:31 - 39  
1 Corinthians 1 - 4  
2 Corinthians 10 - 13  
Ephesians 3:14 - 21

9. Why did Jesus say that John the Baptist was the greatest up to that time, although he didn't perform any signs and wonders? Why was he greater than Moses despite all the signs and wonders that took place at the Exodus?

John 10:40 - 42  
Matthew 11:2 - 15

How can we be greater than John the Baptist?

10. In John 14:12, Jesus said: "I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father."

What did Jesus mean by "greater things"? Does it mean a greater number of miracles or more spectacular miracles or what?

(Remember that the context of this verse is before the cross, the resurrection and the descent of the Holy Spirit.)

11. How did the saints overcome Satan?

Revelation 12:11

12. How was Paul's time similar to our time?

2 Timothy 3:2 - 5

What was the solution offered?

2 Timothy 3:14 - 16

13. What is the difference between “sin living in me” and demonization (demon possession)?

Romans 7

1 Corinthians 5:4 - 5

2 Corinthians 2:5 - 6

2 Corinthians 7:8 - 10

Romans 6:12 - 14

Mark 4:1 - 13

14. Consider James 4:1 - 10 and Ephesians 6:10 - 18. What do you learn about spiritual warfare from these passages?
15. How could 1 Chronicles 11:23 be a helpful strategy in our warfare regarding thought life? Do you see a similarity between the “first link in the chain” of thoughts and the spear of the Egyptian?
16. In 2 Corinthians 10:3 - 6, what are the strongholds about which that Paul is talking? Whose responsibility is it to demolish them?
17. What is your position of theological preference on the issue of spiritual warfare?
18. What is your area of tolerance?
19. What is outside your area of tolerance?

## Works Cited

Bosch, David J. *Transforming Mission*. New York: Orbis Books, 1991.

Noebel, David A. *Understanding the Times*. Manitou Springs: Summit Press, 1991.

Peck, Scott. *People of the Lie*. New York: Touchstone Book, 1983.

Scott, Waldron. *Bring Forth Justice*. Grand Rapids: William B. Eeraman's Publishing Company, 1980.

Longman, Tremper. *Daniel*. Zondervan. Kindle Edition.

### Books by the Author

Jabbour, Nabeel. [\*Unshackled and Growing\*](#). Muslims and Christians on the Journey to Freedom.

Jabbour, Nabeel. [\*The Rumbling Volcano\*](#). Islamic Fundamentalism in Egypt.

Jabbour, Nabeel. [\*The Crescent Through The Eyes of the Cross\*](#).

Jabbour, Nabeel. [\*The Addendum\*](#) to *The Crescent Through The Eyes of The Cross*.

### Blogs by the Author

Please look at the blogs in Dr. Jabbour's website and start with those four that address the **top leaders of Islamic fundamentalism**. Please follow this order.

1. [ISIS: 10 Reasons Muslims are Eager to Join — Nabeel T. Jabbour \(nabeeljabbour.com\)](#)
2. [ISIL's Theological Roots: Ten Men — Nabeel T. Jabbour \(nabeeljabbour.com\)](#)
3. [ISIL Theological Roots: The Next Three Men — Nabeel T. Jabbour \(nabeeljabbour.com\)](#)
4. [ISIL Theological Roots: The Last Two Men — Nabeel T. Jabbour \(nabeeljabbour.com\)](#)

My son, Farid Jabbour, addressed on a Facebook post the **polarization** that existed in America in 2021. I have it as a blog on my website. [Polarization — Nabeel T. Jabbour \(nabeeljabbour.com\)](#)

My friend MJ Bryant addressed in a scholarly work the topic “**American Evangelicals** and US Foreign Policy in the Middle East: Exposing and overcoming missional blind spots.” [You can access this document here.](#)

---