

# The Spiritual Battlefield

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The spiritual realm is just as real as the physical. In fact, you will never understand reality until you first understand this fact; the spiritual created the physical.

## **Genesis 1:1**

*'In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth'*

## **Hebrews 11:3**

*'By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are **visible**.*

Sometimes the Lord opens up the spiritual world for us to see in the same way we see the earthly physical world. The following story of the prophet Elisha and his servant is a case in point.

## **2 Kings 6:15-17**

*'And when the servant of the man of God arose early and went out, there was an army, surrounding the city with horses and chariots. And his servant said to him, 'Alas my master what shall we do'. So he answered 'do not fear, those who are with us are more than those who are with them'. And Elisha prayed and said 'Lord I pray open his eyes that he may see' then the Lord opened the eyes of the young man and he saw. And behold the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha.'*

Sometimes spiritual beings will appear in physical form.

## **Hebrews 13:2**

*'Do not forget to entertain strangers for by so doing some have unwittingly entertained angels'*

## **The earthly and the spiritual worlds are connected.**

What happens in the spiritual realm impacts what happens in the earthly realm. This is true in your life, as what you do in this seen/ visible world affects the unseen spiritual world and vice versa. These next verses explain that the way we relate to God will directly affect our physical situation.

## **Deuteronomy 28:15**

*'But it shall come to pass if you do not obey the voice of the Lord your God to observe carefully all his commandments and his statutes which I command you today that all these curses will come upon you and overtake you'.*

## **Deuteronomy 28:1-2**

*'Now it shall come to pass if you diligently obey the voice of the Lord your God, to observe carefully all his commandments which I command you today that the Lord your God will set you high above all nations of the earth, and all these blessings shall come upon you and overtake you, because you obey the voice of the Lord your God'.*

# The Spiritual Battlefield

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## **Romans 6:16**

*'Do you not know that **to** whom you present yourselves **slaves to obey**, you are that one's **slaves** whom you **obey**, whether of sin leading **to** death, or of obedience leading **to** righteousness?*

## **James 4:6-7**

*'God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble. Therefore resist the devil and he will flee from you'*

The above verse explains that our resistance is necessary for freedom from the devil - a spiritual being with destructive motives. The following verse also explains this.

## **Ephesians 6:12**

*'For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places'*

Understanding the nature of this '*wrestling*' explained above is essential for your own well-being and for advancing the kingdom of God in the earth.

## **Wrestling with evil spiritual powers**

The war in the spirit world is between the forces of God and the forces of the devil. It is important to state that the devil is in no way greater or more powerful than God as if he could defeat God - he can't. The war between God and the devil is over the Lordship of humanity and the earth. This is why Jesus came to earth as a man in order to fight that battle on earth. At the cross Jesus decisively defeated the devil. But the culmination of this battle will not happen until Jesus returns at what is called the 'second coming'. God could simply exert his authority and end it now. However, he has chosen not to do that. He has entrusted the implementation of his victory to those who believe in him.

To illustrate this, here is an example from World War 2; On D-Day, once the Allies had gained a beachhead on mainland Europe, it was clear that the Allies had won the war. However, in order to secure this victory they needed to continue fighting until they had destroyed the German armed forces. This analogy helps us to understand what is happening spiritually. The war is won but the warfare needs to continue in order to establish the victory. This warfare is happening across the earth as believers' battle in prayer over individual lives and over the corporate affairs of mankind. Even though the battle is being waged by human beings, the weapons that are used in this warfare are spiritual in nature and are targeted not against people, but against the spiritual powers of darkness - the devil. This is why we use the term '**spiritual warfare**'. Believers are the ones who do the wrestling so in this sense, the battle is between the devil and God's representatives - those who believe.

These next two verses outline two things. First, it outlines the commission that Jesus gave to his disciples which is to implement the victory of the cross. Second, it outlines the power of the weapons that Jesus has equipped us with and delegated to us for our use.

# The Spiritual Battlefield

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## **Matt 28:18-20**

*'All authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth, Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you, and lo I am with you always, even to the end of the age.'*

## **2 Corinthians 10:4**

*'For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds.'*

## **The spiritual battle is fought primarily in the minds of people.**

These next two verses explain that the arena of the warfare is in what people think and believe. The following saying illustrates this well and is a strategy we have seen at work at the highest levels of global government ... *'if you can change the minds of people you can change the law.'*

## **Romans 12:2**

*'And do not be conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God'*

## **2 Corinthians 10:5**

*'...casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ'*

As people, organisations, towns, cities and nations engage in wrongful thinking and sin then the spiritual powers of darkness take control.

## **Romans 6:16**

*'Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey you are that one's slaves whom you obey, whether to sin leading to death, or to obedience leading to righteousness'*

## **Ephesians 4:25-26**

*'Therefore putting away lying let each one of you speak truth with his neighbour for we are members of one another. Be angry but do not sin, do not let the sun go down on your wrath nor give place to the devil'.*

The opposite is also true regarding living in righteousness. The closer a person, a city or a nation(s) comes to God then the further they are distanced from the influence of the devil. We give an example of this at the beginning of the Foundations study titled 'Understanding Spiritual Warfare'.

## **Deuteronomy 28:1-2**

*'Now it shall come to pass if you diligently obey the voice of the Lord your God, to observe carefully all his commandments which I command you today that the Lord your God will set*

# The Spiritual Battlefield

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*you high above all nations of the earth, and all these blessings shall come upon you and overtake you, because you obey the voice of the Lord your God’.*

## **Matthew 18:20**

*‘For where two or three are gathered together in my name, I am there in the midst of them’.*

## **Spiritual Protection and Spiritual Weapons**

The Lord has provided us with armour to protect us and weapons to fight with.

## **Ephesians 6:10-18.**

*‘Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armour of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil’s schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. Therefore put on the full armour of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord’s people.*

The spiritual armour is to protect us from unrighteousness entering our minds. Unrighteousness is the very character of the devil. God gives us a breastplate of righteousness to guard our hearts – our minds, will and emotions. He gives us a belt of truth to secure us as the truth sets us free. He provides shoes for our feet that as we both believe in and share the gospel; we will walk in his peace. The helmet of the hope of our salvation secures us in the certain assurance of present and eternal hope; mental well-being. Our standing is in Jesus alone, not in ourselves but through our faith in him.

The spiritual weapons are given to enable us to fight against the works of the devil are launched from this platform of righteousness. Our greatest weapon is the word of God. The word of God produces faith (our shield) which in turn results in action and prayer and praise. The following verses give examples of the impact of these spiritual weapons in our warfare...

## **Word of God**

### **Hebrews 4:12**

*‘For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart’.*

## **Faith**

### **Hebrews 11:33**

# The Spiritual Battlefield

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The heroes of faith 'who through faith subdued kingdoms, worked righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, became valiant in battle, turned to fight the armies of the aliens'.

## Prayer

### James 5:16

'... The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.' Another translation says 'the prayer of a righteous man has great power in its effect.'

## Worship / Praise / Thanksgiving

### Psalms 149:6-9

'Let the high praises of God be in their mouth and a two-edged sword in their hand. To execute vengeance on the nations and punishments on the peoples; to bind their kings with chains and their nobles with fetters of iron; to execute on them the written judgment – this honour have all His saints.'

## Resistance against spiritual powers

A basic strategy for defeating demonic attacks comes from the following verse.

### James 4:7

'Therefore submit to God, resist the devil, and he will flee from you'

**Submit to God** – if are you aware of unrepentant sin in your life then you need to address this before resisting the devil. Sin in our lives gives the devil access to our lives; a bit like a plane landing on a runway. When you have repented of the sin, the devil's runway in your life will be taken away. You cannot resist the devil and at the same time give him room to act.

**Resist the devil** – resistance can take several forms. Worship or verbally declaring the truth of God's word is a very effective form of resistance. Remember, the Word of God is our greatest weapon and produces faith in us. There are times when you may need to directly speak to the devil using the word of God. For example, you may be battling against fear, unbelief, condemnation ...

'Demonic spirit of ... (fear)... I resist you in the name of Jesus and command you to leave.'

**And He will flee** – The devil is scared of you. He knows you have power and authority over him through Jesus. He will run away from you when you effectively assert the authority Jesus has given you. In fact, the translation of this word to 'flee' depicts the enemy fleeing like a dog with its tail between its legs.

## The Devil fears you

### 1 John 4:4

'You are of God, little children, and have overcome them (spirits of the antichrist) because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world'

# The Spiritual Battlefield

---

Jesus has defeated the devil at the cross; Jesus lives in you; therefore through Jesus you can defeat all the enemy's attacks against you.

## **Romans 8:37**

*'Yet in all things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us.'*

## **Offering a sacrifice of praise**

When you are in confusion; when you don't know what to do; when you feel the devil against you then offer the sacrifice of praise. In other words, although you will not feel like giving yourself to worship, praise and thanksgiving; let it be an act of sacrifice. As you worship the Lord you are welcoming him into your circumstances. This will bring the presence of God and the enabling of his Spirit into your need. It is often the case in spiritual warfare that the very thing you don't want to do is the very thing you need to do that will bring you into personal victory and breakthrough. The soldiers who stormed the beaches of Normandy in the invasion of Europe may not have wanted to do so but it was only through establishing a beachhead that they would win the war.

## **Hebrews 13:15**

*'Therefore by him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise of God, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to His name'.*

## **A Declaration**

We have often found forming a declaration from the scriptures is very helpful way to resist and overcome the devil's assault in our lives. Again, make sure that you have dealt with any known sin first. I am not saying here that you go digging in your life for sin. What I am saying is that you deal with sin that you know has not been repented of in your life. Here is an example of a declaration we have used to resist the enemy:-

*'I declare in the heavenly realm that through the blood of Jesus I have been justified. I declare that through the blood of Jesus my body is a temple of the Holy Spirit of the living God. I declare that through the blood of Jesus I am seated with Christ in the heavenly realm far above all principality and power. Therefore in the name of Jesus I speak into the heavenly realm and resist all power of darkness coming against me. I bind and cast from me all demonic spirits coming against me in the name of Jesus.'*