

Theology for Life

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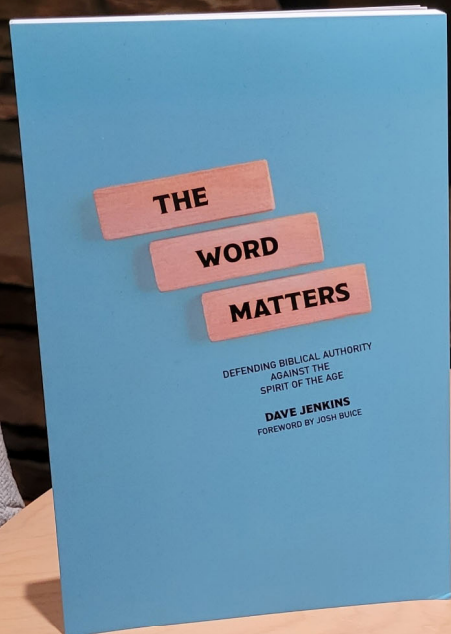


Spiritual Warfare and the Dangers of the Modern-day Deliverance Ministries

Inside this Issue...

- **The Temptation of Jesus**
- **Do Demons Have Legal Rights to Christians?**
- **Spiritual Growth and Spiritual Warfare**

In ***The Word Matters***, Dave Jenkins takes readers by the hand and helps them understand how serious the issue of biblical authority is and how the Bible is under attack, so that they can stand with confidence on the Word of God.

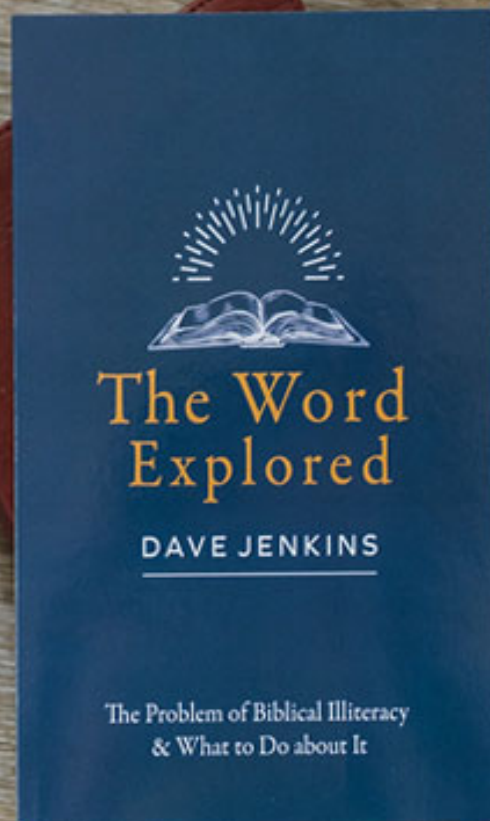


The Word Matters

DEFENDING BIBLICAL AUTHORITY
AGAINST THE SPIRIT OF THE AGE



Grow in your relationship with God!



*The Word Explored:
The Problem of
Biblical Illiteracy &
What to Do about It*
is an easy-to-read,
biblically-based work
for lay-people and
pastors alike.



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Editor's Corner

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Deliverance ministry and spiritual warfare are two of the biggest issues in our day. I know that's a big claim, but it is true (as you are about to see in this issue of *Theology for Life*). The Bible has a lot to say about the reality of how (because Christians live in-between the times) they to engage in real war against an already vanquished foe in Satan (Ephesians 6:11-18).

Deliverance ministers today suggest that not only are Christians transferred from the kingdom of darkness into the Kingdom of the Lord Jesus (Colossians 1), but they can also have demons and need (repeated) deliverance ministry. Christians, such as myself and many others, object to this teaching, because it undermines the sufficiency of God's Word and of God's grace (and our justification) through Christ's death on our behalf. What I just explained is so vital because Christians are not only saved by the grace of God, but they are indwelt by the Holy Spirit. As a result of this, Christians cannot have indwelling demons, and they have no need for deliverance ministry/maintenance.

To the true believer, the Christian life is one in which they have been saved by the grace of God and are growing into who they are because of the it. The Christian life is one of repentance from the start until end. We are held safely because of a good Lord and King, Jesus, who has secured our pardon and will lead us safely home. This, of course, is not to say that Christians cannot be demonically *oppressed*. The main

difference between modern-day deliverance ministries and true Christian ministry lies with understanding the difference between possession (indwelling) and oppression (conflict from without).

Christians live in an earthly place where the world, the flesh, and the devil may cause one to fall to sin and/or experience tribulation. Nobody is denying this reality. But what modern-day deliverance ministers are claiming is that Christians aren't merely oppressed, but *possessed* by demons. In this ideology, there is no room for repentance or sanctification. There is no need to face things head-on and take up your cross. You just go to your deliverance minister and get your "deliverance" to "fix" whatever ails you. To those that teach and practice this "deliverance ministry", everything is caused by a demon (maybe more than one). If you struggle with lust, you purportedly have a demon of lust. If you struggle with anxiety, you purportedly have a demon of idolatry. And the list goes on and on, without mention of sin or the need to repent.

The true and biblically-grounded Christian rejects deliverance ministry, not because they don't want to help people, but because these ministries offer no help to people. They add to the gospel by suggesting that what people need is "deliverance maintenance", instead of the all-sufficient grace of God, that not only saves but also satisfies, sanctifies, and will one day glorify the believer.

In this new issue of *Theology for Life*, you'll not only learn the truth about what the Bible teaches about spiritual warfare, but also what the Church has taught about it. Along the way you'll also be instructed on why the modern-day deliverance ministry is so dangerous and why it "preaches" another gospel other than Christ and Him crucified.

In Christ Alone,

Dave Jenkins

Executive Editor, *Theology for Life Magazine*

Spiritual Growth and Spiritual Warfare

By Joshua Mills



The subject of study in this article is one of spiritual growth and spiritual warfare. At a first glance, these two subjects seem to be at odds with one another. How can a Christian grow spiritually when spiritual warfare is taking

place? We live in a day of great chaos and confusion. Institutions all around us are crumbling. Leaders are failing. Christians are left wondering how will we thrive in a day of great spiritual opposition? Will the Church of Jesus Christ be wiped off the map? Will the plans and purposes of God be thwarted? In this article, I want you to understand one main claim upon your life: you will only stand for Christ in these evil days when you are aware of the spiritual battle that is around you.

In Ephesians 6:10-20, the Apostle Paul marries our two subjects together —

spiritual growth and spiritual warfare. In verses 10-11, Paul writes: *“Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. Put on the whole armor of God, ...”* In other words, God has given you the means—or better said, weapons—for your spiritual growth. The aim of God’s equipping grace among His people is *“that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil.”* In other words, God has given His people spiritual armour to utilize so that we would successfully fight in the spiritual battle at hand.

In verses 12-13, Paul again reminds us of the spiritual nature of the battle that we are in: *“For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm.”*

How can we thrive as Christians in these evil days? Again, I bring you back to my main claim: you will only stand for Christ in these evil days when you are aware of the spiritual battle that is around you. What then must be known by way of implication? Let’s look at three life changing realities.

One: Satan is After Every Christian

The Apostle Peter was a man who knew about spiritual warfare. Though he stumbled into sin in our Lord’s passion, he repented and was restored. Recall our Lord’s comment to Peter in Luke 22:31-32: *“Simon, Simon, behold, 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.”* This reality is true, not only for Peter, but for every Christian. Satan is seeking to “sift you like wheat”.

In 1 Peter 5:8, the Apostle later urged the Church to *“be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.”* In John 8:44, Jesus identifies the devil as *“a liar and the father of lies.”* As

you measure all the various messages from the world against the unchanging and truth of the Word of God, the Devil's lies and schemes become crystal clear. In the Garden of Eden (Genesis 3), the Devil began by twisting the Word of God and lying about the character of God. His tactics remain the same. In every possible way, the Devil is seeking to turn you away from the Truth. He is seeking to present broken cisterns before your eyes that entangle you into sin. How will we stand?

Two: God Has Given Us Means to Thrive Spiritually

In his book, *The Christian in Complete Armour*, William Gurnall writes: "When Satan buffets and temptation washes over you like a tidal wave, you must cling to God's truths. They are your shelter in every raging storm. But you must have them on your hand, ready to use." (i) The weapons that God has given us to use in this raging battle are known as "*the whole armour of God.*" It is outline for us in Ephesians 6:14-18. If we use these means of grace, the Lord—by His power—will allow us to grow spiritually in the midst of a raging battle. Paul writes:

"Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and, as shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace. In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one; and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end, keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints..." (ii)

God has not left us to ourselves to figure out how to grow spiritually and how to fight the battles set before us. Instead, He has graciously given us everything that we need to fight the good fight, and even grow spiritually in that fight. The truths found in Ephesians 6:14-18 are the truths that Gurnall says "we must cling to. They are your shelter in every raging storm." (iii) You must fasten on the

belt of truth. Have the Word of truth daily wash of your mind, will, and affections. Remember each day that you, by grace alone, through faith alone, in

“We are weak and pitiful men and women. We are needy and dependent. He is all-powerful.”

Christ alone, are clothed in the righteousness of Christ (2 Corinthians 5:21). It was the gospel of peace that brought this about in your life! You must be a soldier of prayer and the Word. In prayer, you talk to your Commander in Chief. In the Word, you hear from your Commander in Chief. To stand firm, you must utilize the resources that He has given you. If you do not, you will

stumble and fall. We must all take heed, lest we fall. How, then, will we succeed?

Three: Success is Only Found by Resting in God’s Power

William Gurnall will go on in his book to remind us that “the outcome of the battle rests on God’s performance, not on your skill or strength!” (iv) Our Christian growth and warfare is, as some theologians like to call it, a dependent responsibility. We are utterly dependent on the Lord to stand in this evil day (John 15:5). It is in the “*strength of His might*” that we must stand. We are weak and pitiful men and women. We are needy and dependent. He is all-powerful. Every trial and temptation is too strong and too fierce for us to get through it on our own. Our love for Christ ebbs and flows. Beloved, if we are to succeed and make great strides for Christ, we must ultimately remember that it is only His power at work within us that will make us succeed. If He does not, we labour in vain (Psalm 127:1). We march forward as Christian soldiers on our knees in prayer, praying for His help, His power, His strength.

In the words of *Conflict and Triumph*, William Henry Green reminds us that: “Satan utterly fails to compass the ruin of one of them upon whom Jesus has set his love. He can terrify them; he can torture them; he can make them drag on the weary conflict with sin and corruption while life lasts; he can extort from them bitter groans of agonizing distress; he can shower upon them his fiery darts; but he cannot destroy them. The glimmering spark, which divine grace has kindles, he cannot with all the floods of temptation extinguish. Satan cannot by any means harm the feeblest of God’s saints, who stands up against him in the name of the Lord ... The gates of hell cannot prevail against the Church. The earthquake, which in its violent upheaval threatens to demolish the city of God, but shows how absolutely secure its firm foundations are.” (v)

As we conclude, I remind you again of the main claim: you will only stand for Christ in these evil days when you are aware of the spiritual battle that is around you. Having looked briefly at the spiritual battle before us, it is evident that we will not grow spiritually on our own. We need to rest on Christ’s power and utilize His means so that we can successfully live for Him in our day. May God help you as you fight the good fight of faith.

“Onward, Christian soldiers, marching as to war,
With the cross of Jesus going on before!
Christ, the royal Master, leads against the foe;
Forward into battle, see his banner go!”

— S. Baring-Gould, *Onward, Christian Soldier!*

References:

- i. William Gurnall, *The Christian in Complete Armour* (Edinburgh, Banner of Truth, Vol. 1), 28.
- ii. William Gurnall, *The Christian in Complete Armour* (Edinburgh, Banner of Truth, Vol. 1), 28.
- iii. *Ibid*, 28.
- iv. *Ibid*, 23.
- v. William Henry Green, *Conflict and Triumph* (Edinburgh, Banner of Truth), 30-33.

The Purpose and Importance of Prayer in Spiritual Warfare

By Justin Huffman

It is impossible to stress the importance of prayer without considering the context of prayer, which is spiritual

warfare. Before Paul embarks on his famous description

of “the armor of God” in the sixth chapter of Ephesians, he emphasizes our need for it by insisting that we are—whether we like it or not, and whether we realize it or not—engaged in a spiritual battle.

“Be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. Put on the whole armor of God...praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication” (Ephesians 6:10-12).



Paul goes on to emphasize the spiritual nature of this battle in verse 12, by informing us (or reminding, if we've forgotten) that our enemies are not primarily evil or wicked people—although they can certainly be effective instruments of the enemy—but rather, our chief battle is with the spiritual powers of the devil and his demons.

Now I know I (and Paul) may have lost you there, because you are a child of modern times and modern thinking, and you know better than to believe in tall tales, tooth fairies, and the devil. If this describes you, then you are sadly not alone. One Barna survey revealed that, while 78% of self-identified Christians believe in God as described in the Bible, only about one-fourth of them believe that the devil is a real and living being.

However, this is fundamentally naïve when we consider that Jesus Himself told Peter that Satan desired (a very personal verb!) to have him so that he could sift him like wheat. What a great coup, then, for Satan to have so many convinced that he's not real! The reason camouflage and stealth-technology exist is that any military strategist knows (or learns quickly the hard way) that the best weapon against your enemy is to convince him you're not even there.

Be Strong in the Lord

Doubtless, this is part of the reason Paul begins this whole discussion in Ephesians 6 with the admonition to *"be strong in the Lord."* No matter what popular opinion may tell you at any given time, you must trust in God's assessment of your enemy before you will put on the right kind of armor.

But also, Paul wants to remind us that, no matter who we are or how long we've been Christians, we clearly are not strong enough to stand on our own against the super-human (supernatural) powers of evil. Yet, with God—and with God's armor—we can prevail. So be strong, yes, but always and only *"in the Lord, and in the strength of his might."*

Even Paul's repeated exhortation to "stand" and to put on the armor of God, then, is only correctly understood as a call to greater dependence on Jesus

"The princes of Persia and Greece battle with angelic messengers in Daniel 10..."

Christ as our savior—to a constant and intentional recognition of our need for the truth concerning Jesus, the righteousness that comes from Him, the gospel about Christ, our faith that is centered in Him, and thus the salvation that comes from the Lord. This is the Jesus we learn about in the Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God. Yet, we can only apply—or "put on"—this armor through prayer. We do this

through running to Jesus consciously and repeatedly with our every need.

The Battle

This spiritual battle against spiritual enemies is *real*. If we believe in the Bible, we must believe in spiritual warfare: it wages back and forth across every page of Scripture—from Garden of Eden to Garden of Gethsemane, and all the way to the end of Revelation.

The princes of Persia and Greece battle with angelic messengers in Daniel 10; Satan fights with the angel Michael over the body of Moses in Jude 9; Jesus casts real demons out of a man, as a herd of swine soon discover for themselves in Luke 8; Paul casts a spirit, which brought real financial gain to its masters, out of a damsel in Acts 16; and Satan hinders Paul's visit to Thessalonica (1 Thessalonians 2:18). If you believe the Bible, you must believe in Satan and in his war against the saints.

However, this battle is not only real: it is also *personal*. This is not, in other

words, a battle that your parents or pastor can fight for you; you must be engaged in it yourself. The war is raging already, and we were born into it when we came into this world. But when we became Christians and proclaimed our faith in Jesus Christ, we consciously took sides and, Paul says, it's high time we started living like it!

The Enemy

We wrestle with this enemy whether we like it or not. Unlike popular portrayals of Satan, he is not “for” anyone really. Although he is chiefly opposed to Christ and His Kingdom, Satan delights to bring anyone down. So, while some people certainly are the servants of Satan, Satan himself assists no one and is happy to hurt everyone he can.

When Paul warns that our enemy is “spiritual” he is not, of course, denying that there will be physical foes, including people who will oppose all along the Christian way. He is simply pointing to the greater battle, the greater stakes, and the greater wickedness that exist beyond any personal human conflict.

Of course, the world today says just the opposite: forget about devils, demons, and arguments over truth, and focus attention on poverty, hunger, environmental issues, and cultural oppression of certain people groups. While these concerns can certainly be legitimate, in order to truly or rightly battle them, we must first recognize that they are only the symptom of the much deeper and greater problem of sin. Therefore, the real and lasting solution will not be money or food or conservation or political rights; the great and only solution for the underlying problem of sin is the gospel of Jesus Christ. Without that vital ingredi-

Paul tells us to “put on” the armor, so simply studying about it or understanding how it works is not sufficient.

ent, any help we give is only temporary and ultimately deceptive.

How many of us take to heart the warning that Satan, like a roaring lion, is hunting throughout the earth for anyone he can devour? It should sober us to consider that our enemies are described by Paul in Ephesians not only as spiritual, but powerful. The Bible tells us of six individuals who were personally tempted by Satan—Eve, Job, Jesus, Judas, Peter, and Ananias—and four of these gave way under the temptation, including sinless Eve! And even Job didn't last the whole course, although he successfully endured at the time of Satan's attacks.

Devils recognize no white flag, no Red Cross, no Geneva Convention. They give no quarter; they take no prisoners; they share no sense of value, decency, or fairness. They attack your children at school, your spouse at sleep, your mind in church. They attack new converts, weary travelers, the physically afflicted, and people trying to turn over a new leaf. They will, if they can, get between a husband and his wife, parents and their children, brothers and sisters in the Church, and pastors and their flock. And, like professional football or boxing, each match is carefully tailored to the opponent's weaknesses. It is time we recognize the malice of our enemy and equip ourselves accordingly.

The Armor

Paul tells us to "put on" the armor, so simply studying about it or understanding how it works is not sufficient. We must sleep in it, work in it, play in it. One Christian, with God, is stronger than a host of wicked men, plus all the demons in the universe. We see this reality in the struggles of Elisha with the Syrians, Jonah with Nineveh, Moses with the Egyptians, and Paul with the Jewish leaders. When we walk, and live, and fight in the strength of God, and with the tools He has given us, we are actually on the offensive as the Kingdom of God advancing invincibly throughout the world and in every generation.

Every piece of armor points us back to God as our great need. After all, it is the armor *of God!* And, while we cannot face the supernatural, spiritual, invis-

ble, powerful enemies of darkness in our own strength or cunning, in the strength of Jesus Christ we can stand successfully and even advance consistently.

Praying at All Times

Considering the battle we are in and the spiritual nature of it, it should come as no surprise to us that Paul concludes his overall exhortation to embrace and utilize the armor of God with an exhortation to prayer. Though prayer is not itself named as one of the pieces of spiritual armor, it is as though prayer is the spiritual “force field” that surrounds and empowers the entire armor.

The strength of every other piece of armor comes from prayer, from our utter dependence on the strength of God, rather than the strength of our spiritual determination or endeavors.

“Because there is never a time in our lives when we are not engaged in spiritual battle, from birth to the grave, there is never a time we can afford to neglect prayer.”

How can we not only acknowledge but put on the belt of truth? Through prayer. How do we apply the breastplate of righteousness when we find ourselves frail and guilty of sin yet again? Through prayer. How do we believe the gospel and find peace in it, even while the devil accuses our palpable and undeniable failures? Through prayer. How will we take

up the shield of faith and not find it flimsy and thin? Through prayer. Likewise, the helmet of salvation and the very strength with which we wield God’s Word will come through prayer.

Prayer is not only a constant reminder of our need for Jesus, but it is the very means by which Jesus applies His saving salve and strength to His weary foot soldiers.

Because there is never a time in our lives when we are not engaged in spir-

itual battle, from birth to the grave, there is never a time we can afford to neglect prayer. Talk to Jesus about your doubts and fears. Confess to Jesus your failures and feebleness. Ask Jesus for forgiveness and help. Take the promises of Jesus' sufficient redemption to God in prayer, so that you have the boldness you need even when you know you've not lived as you should.

Pray at all times. This doesn't mean we shouldn't do anything but pray, but it does mean we shouldn't do anything without praying. So, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might. Put on the whole armor of God, by means of prayer, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil.

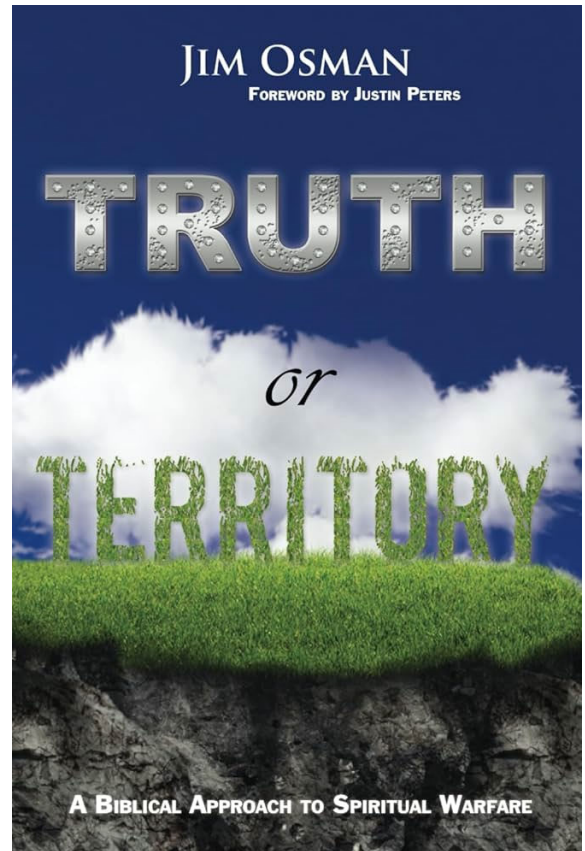
Truth or Territory: A Biblical Approach to Spiritual Warfare

An Interview with Jim Osman

By Dave Jenkins

Jim Osman came to know Christ through the ministry of Cocolalla Lake Bible Camp in the summer of 1987. He took over as the preaching elder of Kootenai Community Church in December of 1996. Jim and his wife, Diedre, have four children: Taryn, Shepley, Ayden and Liam.

T4L: Hello, Jim. Thanks for doing this interview for *Theology for Life Magazine*! We're excited about your book, *Truth or Territory: A Biblical Approach to Spiritual Warfare*. As you know, the matters of deliverance ministry and spiritual warfare are big topics that not



many, but thankfully a growing number of people, are addressing. As we get started today, can you please tell us about your book, *Truth or Territory: A Biblical Approach to Spiritual Warfare*?

Jim: I published that book in 2015 as a fundraiser for our new church building. It originated as a series of articles in our church newsletter, where I addressed various questions that I was receiving on topics related to spiritual warfare. People were asking things like:

- What are generational curses?
- What is a "hedge of thorns"?
- Do we have the authority to bind Satan?
- Should we be rebuking the devil?
- What are "territorial spirits"?

Having once subscribed to a territorial view of spiritual warfare, I was familiar with both the theology behind these questions and the practices they reflected.

However, during my time in Bible College, I came to reject the typical approach to spiritual warfare often seen in the deliverance ministry and spiritual warfare movements. I realized that true biblical spiritual warfare is a battle over truth, not a struggle for territory.

In the book, I explain what the Scriptures actually teach about spiritual warfare, and demonstrate that many modern practices aren't supported by the proof texts frequently cited by so-called spiritual warfare "experts".

T4L: Why should Christians be concerned about modern-day deliverance ministry?

Jim: The deliverance ministry movement undermines believers' confidence in both the Word of God and the sufficiency of Christ's work on their behalf. It shifts our focus away from the perfect redemption we have in Christ and em-

phasizes a perceived need for further deliverance. Additionally, it teaches that sins described in Scripture as the "works of the flesh" (Galatians 5:19-21) are

“You will need to be discerning since proof-texting is central to deliverance ministry teaching.”

actually caused by indwelling demons, which misdiagnoses the root of our sin.

The solution to indwelling sin is the mortification of the flesh, not a power encounter with demons. Christians are being misled to believe that a few quick deliverance sessions will grant them victory over sin. This is the wrong remedy!

T4L: What kind of teaching marks those affiliated with the modern-day deliverance ministry?

Jim: Deliverance teachers, or "Demon Slayers" as they often call themselves, believe that Christians can be demonized (an unclear term, particularly when applied in this specific manner). While they don't teach that a Christian can be "possessed" (which they define as being owned by a demon), they do believe a Christian can be controlled or even dominated by a demon. As a result, they claim that every Christian needs deliverance, and that it should be a routine part of a believer's life. Similar to changing the oil in a car, they advocate for a regular "deliverance" maintenance program to flush out any demonic spirits that may have entered a person's life and body.

Furthermore, they claim that ongoing private revelation is essential for effective deliverance. They rely on a "word of knowledge" or even the testimony of demons for guidance because Scripture does not provide detailed instructions on how to perform exorcisms. While the exorcisms performed by Jesus and the Apostles are described in the Bible, there are no step-by-step instructions on how to carry them out.

T4L: How should Christians speak out against the modern-day deliverance ministry?

Jim: This is a challenging issue because the deliverance ministry is rapidly growing in popularity, and many are being drawn in by the excitement and subsequently misled by its promises. I believe the best way to engage with people on this topic is by asking them to defend their claims. Ask them to show where Scripture instructs us to cast out demons in Christians (i.e. the reason for deliverance in the Church Body).

You will need to be discerning since proof-texting is central to deliverance ministry teaching. Any believer engaging in this discussion should have at least a basic understanding of what Scripture says about demon possession and exorcisms. For further study, I recommend *What the Bible Teaches about Spiritual Warfare*, by Robert Dean Jr. and Thomas Ice. At the risk of sounding self-serving, my book, *Truth or Territory*, also covers this subject in detail.

T4L: What is idea behind generational sin and why should Christians be concerned about it?

Jim: Deliverance experts claim that demonic powers, possessions, and influence can be passed down from one generation to the next, often referred to as "bloodline curses". According to their teaching, a person can be under a curse, demonic influence, or bound by sinful habits due to the unbelief of their ancestors. They often cite Exodus 20:5 to support this idea. They argue that unless these ancestral sins are verbally renounced, confessed, and a prayer of renunciation is recited, demons will have legal rights in a *believer's life*.

However, this is not the message of Exodus 20:5. The passage simply states that if children continue in the sinful, unrepentant ways of their ances-

tors, they will face the same judgment. Ezekiel 18 offers a perfect response to this false teaching, showing that each person is responsible for their own sin.

As believers, we can have confidence that, having been transferred from the kingdom of darkness into the Kingdom of God's Son (Colossians 1:13-14) and redeemed from our futile way of life (1 Peter 1:18), we do not need further deliverance. To suggest otherwise undermines the work of Christ on the cross, which should be offensive to every believer.

Scripture and Spiritual Warfare

By Michael Schultz



It should come as no surprise to Christians that the Bible is a book riddled with stories of warfare. After all, it is an historical account of much of human history, and humans quite often go to war with one another. In fact, humanity scarcely made it out of the garden before violence broke out between two brothers, resulting in the murder of Abel by Cain.

Oddly, then, it sometimes comes as a surprise to Christians to find the New Testament using warrior language to describe the lives we ought to live. Importantly, the war in which Christians are to engage is to be spiritually focused rather than combative towards

other humans. For example, we read verses like Romans 8:13, which commands us to *kill* the deeds of the body which are fleshly and not spiritual. This command is to be violent with our fleshliness as we bring our bodies into subjection to God's Spirit. Second Corinthians 10:4 reminds us that while we are at war, our weapons are not "*of the flesh*" but rather are spiritual. So, what do the Scriptures say about this Spiritual Warfare that we're to be engaged in?

One: Scripture Tells Us Who Our Enemies Are – Our Sin-Nature and the Forces of Satan

Often neglected in the discussion of spiritual warfare is the first and foremost enemy of all God's people, which is our own sin-nature. We must recognize from the outset that Satan is, all things considered, on the outside of us. He is our enemy and a powerful one at that, but he is nevertheless outside of us and does not "force" us to do anything. A much more formidable and dangerous enemy is, surprisingly, our own sinful desire. Peter pointed this out in 1 Peter 2:11, writing, "*Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul.*"

Our own "passions" or sinful desires of the flesh, Peter says, are waging war against our souls. We must recognize that we have a sin-nature that we must battle against every day of our lives. It is this very sin-nature that Paul refers to in Romans 8:13 when calling us to "*put to death*" the deeds of the body.

The second, and more widely recognized enemy of God's people, is Satan and the forces at his command. Importantly, Satan is not omniscient (all-knowing), omnipresent (capable of being multiple/all places at the same time), or omnipotent (all-powerful). Still, he is powerful and hates humanity, because he is a murderer and has been from the beginning (John 8:44). He hates that God saves us, because God did not send His Son to save the fallen angels (Hebrews 2:16), nor did He offer them salvation (2 Peter 2:4). Satan hates God

and he hates all that brings glory to God. He hates us for being forgiven; He hates us for being happy; He hates us for all that we are. Your sinful nature and Satan's hatred for you are the two enemies you are at war with, biblically speaking.

Two: Scripture Tells Us What Warfare is Made on Us by These Enemies of Ours

Our first and most powerful enemy—our sin-nature—is said to be the primary cause of our temptation. James 1:14 tells us that *“each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire.”* Imagine a child outside playing basketball, and their home is positioned on a very steep hill. He or she misses a shot, and suddenly the ball takes off at great speed, rolling down the hill. The child did not intentionally put that ball in motion, rolling down the hill. It was simply the inclination of the hill that made the ball roll so quickly in that direction.

Similarly, the sin-nature we carry is an *inclination*—and a strong one—that takes every opportunity it can to “roll” us down the hill towards sin, oftentimes quite surprisingly and quickly. James says that it begins with temptation that springs out of our sinful desire, but he goes on in James 1:15 to explain that, while sometimes these desires may only produce temptation, in many instances they will produce sin, which consequently produces death.

The Apostle John would sum up our chief “problem desires” as being threefold: *“The desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life”* (1 John 2:16). These each, in turn, serve as the inclination on which we find ourselves moving towards sin.

Satan, as a personal being, can take a much more direct approach towards leading us into sin. Scripture implies that Satan searches for our weaknesses. First Peter 5:8 speaks of Satan as *“prowling around like a roaring lion, seeking some-*

one to devour.” And he will use any resources available to him. He used the genuine love that Solomon had for his many wives to lead him into idolatry (1 Kings 11:1-4). First Corinthians 15:33 says that Satan can use our friends to corrupt us. There are even several instances in the Bible where Satan seemingly inspired certain thoughts to occur in peoples’ minds (John 13:2; Acts 5:3-4; 1 Chronicles 21:1).

While the story of Job is a unique one when considering the activity of Satan (and therefore should not be taken as testifying to the norm of his power), it does give at least one very good example of how remorseless Satan is. We are not surprised by how Satan torments Job physically, or in his depriving Job of all that he loves. But we should be struck with awe at how deliberate Satan’s tormenting is.

Notice that Job seemed to have had a lot of anxiety about his children’s relationship with God, as he offered sacrifices for them after every feast they had, just in case they had sinned against God (Job 1:5). So, when did Satan see to it that Job’s children died? When they were feasting and drinking (Job 1:18-19).

“As if that would not be good enough, God goes further and chooses to permit these battles for the ultimate purpose of bringing Himself glory...”

Job did not have an opportunity to ask God to forgive his children, as was his usual practice, and likely spent much time wondering if that contributed to their death or their eternal state. Satan capitalized on Job’s anxiety over his children’s souls, just to further torment him. We must never underestimate how cunning and hateful our enemy, the devil,

truly is. Our sin-nature inclines us towards sin unrelentingly, and Satan desires more than anything to bring about our misery by using our circumstances, thoughts, or anything else he can.

Three: Scripture Tells Us Why and How God Allows This Warfare to Occur

As with many things, we might be prone to turn to God and say, "Why would you even let that take place?" Well, Christians must always keep in mind the promise of Romans 8:28, which states, "*And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.*" And yet, this can sometimes come across as a trite saying, seemingly avoiding the real problem of explaining the hardships or understanding the pain a person is enduring.

There are Scripturally explicit reasons for which God would permit us to be attacked in this spiritual warfare. For one, the Apostle James tells us that going through these hardships is a tool God uses to sanctify us (James 1:2-3). Furthermore, Peter would say that these attacks on God's people produce confidence in the genuineness of our faith when we endure them gracefully, and that this results in "*praise and glory and honor*" (1 Peter 1:6-7). Charles Spurgeon wrote of this element, saying, "As children do not run away from their Father's side when a big dog barks at them, the howlings of the devil tend to drive us nearer to Christ."

Beyond these personally beneficial reasons, one should not neglect the fact that God uses these battles to show us who He is. He manifests His ability to sustain His people, even when they have no capacity for continuing in themselves (2 Corinthians 4:7-9); He shows His ability to endow His people with a greater caliber of living, even when enduring unbearable temptations (1 Corinthians 10:13); He shows His ability to deliver His people when they are overpowered and exhausted (2 Corinthians 1:8-10).

As if that would not be good enough, God goes further and chooses to permit these battles for the ultimate purpose of bringing Himself glory, by delivering His people victory through the warfare. In Romans 16:20, He promises that

His people will crush Satan's head just as Christ did. But, perhaps most inspiringly for us, God tells us that He permits us to engage in these battles for the sake of making us pure when we were unable to purify ourselves, so that He may have the ultimate glory (Isaiah 48:10-11).

Not only should we take hope in the fact that this warfare is meaningful, but we should be constantly reminded that the warfare is under the unwavering watch of the God, who loves us and cares for us. He decides how far to allow the attacks on us to go, as He did with Paul when he received a "*messenger of Satan to harass*" him, which God used to keep him from becoming conceited (2 Corinthians 12:7-10). Clearly, God did not allow Satan to have his way with Paul. God was in control of how much of an attack Satan could make on His servant, just as He was in the case of Job (Job 1:12). God limits the attacks we experience, both from temptations around and within us, and from attacks by the forces of Satan. This is sometimes called *restraining grace* (cf. Genesis 20:6). God has many good and righteous reasons for permitting us to go through this Spiritual Warfare, but He also should be understood as being actively involved in it alongside us.

Four: Scripture Tells Us About Our Resource for Waging Spiritual Warfare – The Word of God

The most famous passage regarding Spiritual Warfare is Ephesians 6:10-18. The imagery which Paul uses is quite inspiring, as he refers to Christians as wearing armor in a battle "*against rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.*"

Accordingly, the armor is described symbolically: as a soldier wears a belt prominently around himself, let a Christian be encompassed in truth; as a soldier wears a prominent breastplate for protection, let a Christian display their

righteousness; as a soldier wear shoes prepared to move swiftly or stand firm, let a Christian be ready to give the gospel in times of upheaval or peace; as a soldier defends himself with a shield, let a Christian take refuge in his faith; as a

“Christ, as God, had omnipotent power within Himself, through which He could simply have destroyed Satan, but He did not use His omnipotent strength.”

soldier wears a helmet to protect that which is most important in his body, let a Christian know that their salvation protects that which is most important—their soul.

But the final article described is the only article used for an offense rather than defense. As a soldier cuts down his enemies

with a sword, therefore let a Christian cut down his enemies (spiritual forces in the heavenly places) with the Word of God. Here rests the single most misunderstood aspect of Spiritual Warfare. The Christian life, in general, is to be one prepared to defend and protect against attacks, but the Word of God alone is the method through which we are to fight back.

When Jesus was waging His most public example of Spiritual Warfare during the temptation of Matthew 4, He had many weapons at His disposal. We learn later that Jesus claims He could (at will) call down legions of angels to defend Himself (Matthew 26:53). Indeed, as soon as the temptation concludes, angels come to minister to Him (Matthew 4:11). And yet, He did not use the angels to fight Satan’s attacks. Christ, as God, had omnipotent power within Himself, through which He could simply have destroyed Satan, but He did not use His omnipotent strength. He was certainly smarter and wiser than Satan, but He did not use rhetoric or logic alone. He could have revealed His glory, which would have prompted Satan to flee in hatred or perhaps even die on the spot (Psalm 68:1-2). God sometimes speaks from Heaven to confirm that Jesus is His Son (Matthew 3:17), but when Satan questions His Sonship He doesn’t call for a mir-

able to validate it. No, He doesn't do any of that. The only method through which Christ incarnate, the perfect man, waged Spiritual Warfare was through the written Word of God.

Repeatedly, He says, *"It is written."* As Leonard Ravenhill once said, "He threw the book at the devil!" He used the Bible as the solitary weapon through which He would win victory in Spiritual Warfare, and through this, He set the

“When we respect, know, and obey God’s Word, the Apostle Peter tells us that we can then do as Christ did, and wage Spiritual Warfare...”

precedent for us. Even though He was alone, even though He was at His weakest and most vulnerable, and even though Satan constantly tried to change the subject or shift his point of attack, Christ used the written Word of God alone to win the battle. And in turn, each article of the Christian's armor in Ephesians 6 is

grounded in our aligning ourselves with the truth of God's written Word. It is alive and serves God's people well (Hebrews 4:12). Jesus Christ had at His disposal every weapon of Spiritual Warfare we may wish we had, and yet He chose to use the only weapon we do have access to—God's written Word.

Five: Scripture Tells Us How to Use God's Word for Spiritual Warfare

We are to use our single weapon of Spiritual Warfare appropriately. Just as a modern soldier must respect and cherish his firearm, a Christian must respect and cherish their Bible. Nehemiah 8:5 describes God's people as showing such respect for God's Word that they stood to their feet when it was read.

Beyond simply respecting and revering God's Word, we are to be reading and teaching it. The Hebrew *Shema*, an Old Testament prayer, calls God's people (Deuteronomy 6:6-9) to be intimately familiar with His Word as nothing else

that we know—memorizing it and committing it to our own memory and that of our children's. Beyond regularly hearing it, we are to obey it. James 1:22 tells us to be *not only* hearers, but also "*doers of the Word.*" Importantly, hearing and doing are both expected of a Christian.

When we respect, know, and obey God's Word, the Apostle Peter tells us that we can then do as Christ did, and wage Spiritual Warfare on all that opposes God and His people until "*the morning star rises*" (2 Peter 1:19) and Christ returns to win final and total victory forever. If a Christian will respect and reverence God's Word, read and memorize God's Word, and obey God's Word, they will have—as Christ had—the perfect and only weapon necessary for fending off any attack and winning ultimate victory over their sinful nature or Satanic forces.

The Temptation of Jesus

By Scott Hurst

How do we overcome temptation?

How do we choose holiness instead of sin? Ask a group of Christians and many will point to Matthew 4:1-11, telling you to follow Jesus's example and fight Satan with the Word of God. Jesus' temptation in the wilder-



ness does teach us how to fight temptation, but seeing Jesus as only an example to follow is an incomplete reading of this text. Before we learn to follow His example, we need to see how this text reveals Him to be the Savior of sinners.

Jesus: More than a Model

Throughout the Old Testament, the faithfulness of God's people is tested.

There are tests—such as the one Abraham faces in Genesis 22—and there are temptations—such as the serpent slithering up to Eve in the Garden of Eden—which they either pass with faithfulness or fail through rebellion. Though there are some, like Joshua and Caleb, who prove faithful, the Old Testament pattern is rebellion. Adam ate the fruit, Abraham took Hagar as a concubine, and Israel sang praises to a golden calf at the foot of Mount Sinai.

Jesus steps into the same story to face the same test. He is not simply the next in line. He enters the story as the second Adam, the promised offspring of Abraham, and the true Israel. Like them, He faces testing. Unlike them, He doesn't fail. Jesus reenacts the story of God's people with one key difference: where they failed, He succeeds.

Links with the Old Testament Story

Satan's three temptations help us see Jesus reenacting the Old Testament story. The poison in the serpent's words

to Eve was that God was somehow unkind and did not love them. His forked tongue claimed God has ulterior motives: *"No! You will certainly not die..."*

The serpent continues to the woman, *"In fact, God knows that when you eat it your eyes will be opened and you will be like God,*

knowing good and evil" (Genesis 3:4-5). Matthew and Mark place Jesus' baptism immediately before His trial in the wilderness. As Satan slithers up to Him, the words of the Father, *"This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well-pleased"* are still ringing in our ears (Matthew 3:15-17, Mark 1:11-13). Satan attacks the Father's love for the Son: *"If you are the Son of God"* (Matthew 4:3). He attempts to sink his teeth into God's redemptive plan to save sinners through the suffering of Je-

Satan attacks the Father's love for the Son: "If you are the Son of God" (Matthew 4:3).

sus. He offers Jesus the crown of glory by avoiding suffering and therefore questions the Father's commitment and love for Him. This scene shares the tone of Genesis 3. It's a crucial link helping us understand Jesus as the second Adam, who is faithful where the first Adam fell.

Jesus counters Satan's three temptations with the Word of God, specifically from Deuteronomy 6-8. This serves as a model for us, which we'll examine later, and functions as a link between Jesus in the wilderness and Israel's wilderness wanderings. In the wilderness, their trust in God was tested and—despite God's overwhelming grace and steadfast love for them—they often chose the *easy* road (the golden calf that their eyes could see), instead of the narrow road of obedience. In three ways, Jesus faces the same test.

“Jesus is unmoved, and He reveals the emptiness of Satan’s promise.”

The temptation to make bread claims He must satisfy His needs

(Matthew 4:3). Satan tells Jesus that He cannot depend on the Father to care for Him, but He must care for Himself. It's an echo of Eve hearing that she should take the fruit, of Abraham believing he should take Hagar as a concubine, of Jacob stealing the blessing through deception, and of David ordering a census to count His kingdom. Satan seasons this temptation with the lie that God cannot be trusted. Jesus counters with God's promise *“Man must not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of God”* (Matthew 4:4). Our belly aches don't tell the entire story. We don't live by our hunger pains, but by obedience to God. What God gives is exactly what we need.

The temptation to leap off the Temple claims He has the right to avoid suffering and that He should make the Father prove He will keep His word. It's a deliberate test put on God, much like the Atheist who says that God must do

what they demand before they will believe Him. Jesus counters *"You shall not put the Lord your God to the test"* (Matthew 4:7). God does not bend to our will.

The final temptation claims that He can have the crown without the Cross. It's a test to take the easy road, the shortcut to the Promised Land instead of God's chosen path through the wilderness.

For many, this temptation hits home. We cannot make rocks into bread and likely won't find it appealing to jump from the top of the temple. Yet, we crave the crown without the cross. We want abs without a diet and exercise. Shortcuts to success, especially if they offer to remove the hard bits of life, are extremely enticing.

Jesus is unmoved, and He reveals the emptiness of Satan's promise. *"Then Jesus told him, "Go away, Satan! For it is written: Worship the Lord your God, and serve only him"* (Matthew 4:10). He chooses God's way, especially when it means suffering, because He trusts the Father. The crown Satan offers is godless and therefore worthless. Jesus knows the true crown follows the road to the Cross.

Satan takes three swings and strikes out. Jesus wins for Himself, proving He is the unique "Son of God." He affirms the surpassing value of obedience to God and His steadfast love. Like David slaying Goliath, He also wins on behalf of His people. Jesus is the true offspring of Eve who crushed the serpent's head (Genesis 3:15). Satan, therefore, has no claim over all who are in Christ. In Christ, God has defeated Satan and decisively proven His love for His people.

Before Jesus is our example, He is our Savior. He steps into the story as our champion, winning a decisive battle in our place, and then calls us to come and share the spoils of His victory. We can follow His example and combat temptation because Jesus beat Satan.

Steeped in Scripture, Equipped to Endure

Once we see that Jesus is more than a role model, we can learn to follow

His example. Disciples walk the road behind their teacher and here Jesus teaches us two lessons: we will face temptation, and we have assurance of victory. Jesus teaches us to wield the Word of God against the testing of Satan. One dangerous, but sadly common, way to oversimplify this application is by using the Bible to fight temptation just like we take Tylenol to combat headaches. Jesus doesn't do this.

When Jesus wields Scripture against Satan, Satan fires back, using Scripture against Jesus. He wields Psalm 91:11-12 against Jesus as “proof” that the Father would not allow any harm to come to Jesus, even if He threw Himself from the pinnacle of the temple (Matthew 4:5-6). Notice how subtle and subversive the temptation is—Satan wants Jesus to avoid suffering. Jesus came into the world to save sinners by suffering in their place. Satan’s twist is that such suffering is evidence of the Father’s cruelty. To put it differently, the deception behind Satan’s smile sounds like this: “Hasn’t the Father said you won't strike your foot against a stone? Then why would He let you suffer?”

The Word of God is the Sword of the Spirit (Ephesians 6:17). We absolutely must unsheathe the sword to fight for holiness. But a skilled opponent can find ways to use your weapon against you. That’s what Satan tries on Jesus, and often how he battles Christians. Here is the passage Satan quotes in its original context:

*“Because you have made the Lord—my refuge,
the Most High—your dwelling place,
no harm will come to you;
no plague will come near your tent.
For he will give his angels orders concerning you,
to protect you in all your ways.
They will support you with their hands
so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.*

*You will tread on the lion and the cobra;
you will trample the young lion and the serpent” (Psalm 91:9-13).*

It's not impossible to imagine someone in a Bible study group dogmatically declaring that any suffering is outside of God's will for us, all while citing this passage. A quick scan with an ill-informed theological framework and this reading makes sense. It's deceptive because it is *almost* true. It's a very convincing costume of Biblical Christianity. God *does* intend good for us and *does* promise to be our refuge, but it twists God's Word and uses it as a license for testing God's honesty.

D. A. Carson explains, "Satan's deceit lay in misapplying his quotation into a temptation that easily traps the devout mind by apparently warranting what might otherwise be thought sinful." (i) Simply lining up a series of Bible verses won't help against what Satan does here. Jesus shows that to endure the subtle deceptiveness of twisting Scripture we must be so formed by God's Word that we can smell when something is off.

Jesus responds to Satan's twisted Scripture, "*Again it is written, 'You shall not put the Lord your God to the test'" (Matthew 4:7).* Satan ripped a passage out of context, out of the Biblical story, and created a wrong application. Jesus draws on the story of Israel, who complained when God didn't take them to the Promised Land by the easy road but took them through the wilderness. Jesus will not be swayed. The Father's love isn't shown through the absence of suffering but by His presence through suffering, and His strengthening power to endure suffering.

Like Jesus, we need to use the Bible in combat against Satan. To do this well we need to be steeped in Scripture. Read the Bible as much as possible, ask questions, read good books such as commentaries and theological writings, and engage with people outside your tradition and generation. Don't neglect the role of your church in your interpretation of Scripture. I firmly believe in the

Protestant principles of the priesthood of all believers and sola scriptura, but neither implies that the Christian life is meant to be just me and my Bible. We have blind spots and make missteps in interpreting the Bible. Correction comes when someone in our Bible study says, "I don't think Psalm 91 teaches that suffering is outside of God's will for us. Let me explain why."

Lining up scripture verses like Tylenol pills doesn't work because it short-changes the formative nature of God's Word. Jesus isn't a model of proof-texting, but the example of someone whose mind, heart, and soul are so formed by God's Word that Satan's bullets leave no wounds. We can't simply launch proof-texting grenades. Instead, to follow Jesus's example, we must be deeply formed by God's Word and therefore *"transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may discern what is the good, pleasing, and perfect will of God"* (Romans 12:2).

"Armed in Christ with the Word of God, we have all we need to guard against temptation and pursue holiness."

Conclusion

The account of Jesus' temptation in the wilderness is rich with help to endure temptation. While there aren't demons lurking behind every temptation, Paul says in Ephesians 6:11-12, *"Put on the full armor of God so that you can stand against the schemes of the devil. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers of this darkness, against evil, spiritual forces in the heavens."* Jesus goes before us and conquers *"the cosmic powers of this darkness"* and therefore we face temptation from a place of victory. If we are in Christ *"the accuser ... has been thrown down"* (Revelation

12:10). Jesus is the champion in whom we are more than conquerors. He also puts a weapon in our hands: the Word of God.

Jesus' temptation in the wilderness reveals His victory over Satan. Christ is King. What is likewise revealed is how He equips His disciples to persevere in faith when tempted. Armed in Christ with the Word of God, we have all we need to guard against temptation and pursue holiness.

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Do Demons Have Legal Rights to Christians?

By Dawn Hill

“And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross. He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him” (Colossians 2:13-15).

The belief of demonic legal rights is a fundamental teaching within the modern deliverance movement. The practices and works of family members going back four generations are viewed



as being relevant in identifying and breaking-off generational curses and areas of demonic entrance into family bloodlines. It is said that what a family member does not conquer has legal rights to pass down further into future generations. Many are instructed not to “claim” an illness or struggle in the possessive, by using phrases such as *my depression* or *my sickness*. Deliverance leaders teach that when a person does this, he/she is giving that illness or struggle legal grounds to remain, thereby also providing a pathway way to future generations.

There are professing, self-proclaimed modern-day “apostles”, who will tell those under their leadership how important it is to remain under the anointing of a leader, so that legal rights cannot be obtained by the devil to attack the congregants. Sinful practices, such as participation in the occult, are viewed as giving way to demonic legal rights. There is an appeal to personal experience when dealing with such things, which is then used to interpret Scripture in reference to this belief.

One verse often referenced is Exodus 20:4, due to it affirming the adverse effect on third and fourth generations. However, upon looking at this passage, there is no reference to demons indwelling those who believe in God and obey Him. Rather, it addresses the sin of idolatry and the repercussions to future generations for this, and for not being taught to obey God’s law. Even when looking at the account of Job, we can see that Satan was permitted to afflict Job outwardly and that God’s sovereignty was on display. There is no mention of Satan being given legal rights to indwell Job. Some will teach that Job’s fear is what gave way to these attacks by Satan, but if we take time to read the first two chapters, we will see what transpired in order for Job to be afflicted and how Job responded in the midst of God’s sovereignty.

There are some important thoughts to consider regarding this teaching in the modern deliverance movement. First, the Apostles of Christ did not teach

about any legal rights of demons to indwell born-again believers. When reading the epistles, we find that spiritual warfare is indeed present in our lives (Ephesians 6:10-18, James 4:7, 1 Peter 5:8), but there is no instruction to cast demons out of fellow believers, because of legal rights granted to demons or any other reason.

Though generations to follow can reap from the consequences of past sinful practices in families and societies, this does not conclude that demons have been brought into family bloodlines due to the sinful practices of one ancestor (or even several ancestors). To instruct professing Christians that they are responsible for breaking generational curses in family lines, where demons are said to have gained legal access, is to create a system where a fallible human being is his/her own savior on a wheel of spiritual bondage. The argument could also be made that this belief lends more toward the sovereignty of Satan, rather than the sovereignty of God.

Second, spiritual warfare is real, and it is not something to be ignored. We must be aware that we are in a spiritual battle and that we also contend with our flesh and the world. However, we are not to fixate on Satan or demons. We are to focus on Jesus Christ and to trust Him as our Deliverer and our Refuge. We have not been left ill-equipped; God has sent His Spirit to indwell those who have been regenerated, and He has left us His Word that is sufficient for life and godliness. Ephesians 2:2 tells us that the prince of the power of the air (Satan) is the one at work in the sons of disobedience. That is *not* born-again believers. We have been saved by grace through faith, as we are assured further in this passage, and this is God's doing and His work. The battle against the enemy for the Christian is from without, not from within.

Third, we are not to be ignorant of the enemy's schemes. I believe that one scheme is to encourage the believer to focus upon Satan (and/or demons) so much so that God's gospel and His Word are inadvertently viewed as insuffi-

cient. In the modern deliverance movement, power is viewed as “renouncing”, “confessing”, “binding the devil”, and “witnessing [alleged] demons leave” through a deliverance session. This can include writhing, coughing, gagging, vomiting, conversing with said demon, etc. In other words, those professing Christ are told that they need demons cast out their flesh or their soul, while the Holy Spirit is said to dwell only in the *spirit* of that person. People are then told that they need to maintain their deliverance by doing what is instructed by these leaders, so that the devil does not regain legal rights to re-enter.

How is this good news? How does this not diminish the truth of the power of the Holy Spirit in the life of a born-again believer? He seals us for the day of redemption. He is the guarantee of our salvation, which is deliverance from Sa-

“I fear that this movement has created more false converts of these books than true disciples of the Way.”

tan’s tyranny. While in this world, we are assured that we are His temple (1 Corinthians 6:19-20), and we are to glorify Christ in our bodies. Sadly, it is my contention that the Holy Spirit is one of the most abused and misrepresented members of the Godhead in the modern deliverance movement. There is a propensity to flock to these leaders and to their books, which contain extrabiblical “revelation(s)” about how to be set free from demons and

their legal rights, rather than understanding sanctification, personal accountability for sin, and Biblical discipleship in regard to sin and proper spiritual warfare. I fear that this movement has created more false converts of these books than true disciples of the Way.

Finally, as believers in Christ, we are reminded that the battle of the mind is best fought with the renewal of our minds, which comes through the God-

breathed Word (the Bible). Meditating on His Word and asking the Lord to help us by His Spirit are glorious means by which He has allowed us to grow in our walk with Christ, as we sojourn in this world by His grace and mercy. We have been given fellow believers and God-fearing church leaders to walk with us and to help us in our sanctification and accountability. We have been given the Holy Spirit, the Third Person of the Trinity, to help strengthen and guide us. We were bought at a price, and that was not a partial purchase.

Dear Christian, be assured that Jesus Christ did not have to regain authority or legal rights from the devil in order for you to be victorious. You do not have to figure out which ancestor dabbled in the occult in order to be free from generational legal rights in your family. You do not have to sit under a specific anointed leader in order to be protected from the devil. Jesus Christ truly does bring freedom.

We are reminded in John 8:31-32 that those who are truly His disciples abide in His Word, and the truth testifying of Him sets us free. He has delivered us from the penalty of sin by His atoning work on the cross. He has delivered us and is continuing to deliver us from the power of sin through our sanctification. He has sent His Spirit to indwell us and to empower us by His grace, as we make our pilgrimage in this world. He will deliver us from the presence of sin when He takes us home to be with Him in glory.

God never lost His authority in this world. He has brought us from death to life by forgiving our transgressions of the law. Jesus Christ paid the debt we owed for our disobedience to God's laws. He has not only saved us, but He has conquered demonic powers. That victory was a public display. The gospel of Jesus Christ should be a daily reminder to us of the power with which God has worked and continues to work for His glory and our good. His gospel brings the greatest (and only needed) deliverance.

Spiritual Warfare in Scripture and Church History

By Dave Jenkins



Spiritual warfare is vitally important in the world of spiritual growth. With the increase of New Age thinking, atheism, Satanism, and a growing interest in the occult worldwide, the need for Christians to understand what spiritual warfare is has never been greater. Moreover, spiritual warfare is becoming an increasingly confusing topic to study as Christians have a variety of views on the topic, some of which are biblical, but most of which are not. The classic view of spiritual warfare is defined by repentance, faith, and obedience. The classic mode of warfare— evangelism, discipleship, and personal growth— follows the

pattern of Jesus facing Satan in the desert. The standard guides for spiritual warfare in this mode have been the Book of Proverbs, the way Jesus addressed evil, and the teaching of the New Testament epistles.

Puritan pastoral theologians wrote frequently and with great depth on spiritual warfare. As they wrote about Scripture, the devil, and human nature, they were alert to the incredible evil and deceptive strategies of Satan. At the same time, they made a heart-searching analysis of the human condition. The Puritans were not demythologized moderns; they lived in a spirit-filled world and were well aware of spiritual warfare. They saw the combat, snares, deceptions and schemes of Satan. Books in print from Puritans, after over three hundred years, include Thomas Brook's *Precious Remedies Against Satan's Devices*, John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* and *Holy War*, and William Gurnall's work, *The Christian in Complete Armor*.

Ephesians 6:10-20 gives the best explanation of the classic mode of spiritual warfare: reliance on the power and protection of God, embracing the Word of God, specific obedience, fervent and focused prayer, and the aid of fellow believers. Spiritual warfare against the power of evil is a matter of consistently and repeatedly turning from darkness to the Light in the midst of assailing darkness. Christians fight spiritual warfare by repentance, faith, and obedience. Recognizing the powerful influence of Satan and sin within the human heart, classic-mode pastoral theologians call for biblical sanctification.

Ephesians 6:10-18 gives the best instruction in the New Testament on spiritual warfare. Ephesians 6:10-20 describes the whole armor of God. In this section, Paul concludes his exhortations with instructions for all Christians. His imagery is a sustained portrayal of the Christian life as spiritual warfare using the Lord's resources. Paul opens this section in Ephesians 6:10-13 by introducing the armor of God and focusing on the strength it gives. In Ephesians 6:10, the word meaning *be strong* (ἐνδυναμοῦσθε - *endynamousthe*) emphasizes that the Chris-

tian cannot stand against the supernatural with mere human powers, but must rely on the strength of the Lord's own might (Ephesians 1:19), which the Lord supplies through prayer (6:18).

The Greek word for the phrase "whole armor" (πανοπλία – *panoplia*) refers to the complete equipment of a fully armed soldier—consisting of both shields and weapons like those described in verses 16-17. Paul's description here draws primarily on Old Testament allusions, yet the terms used also overlap well with Roman weaponry (especially the terms for the large, door-shaped shield and the short stabbing sword). Visible portraits of such weaponry can be found on numerous military reliefs throughout the Roman Empire. The word *schemes* (μεθοδείας - *methodeías*) in Ephesians 6:11 exposes the diabolical origin of the deceitful schemes of those teaching false doctrine (1 John 2:18, 22; 4:3; 2 John 7).

Ephesians 6:12 gives a list of spiritual rulers, authorities, and cosmic powers, and gives a sobering glimpse into the devil's allies—the spiritual forces of evil who are powerful in their exercise of cosmic powers over this present darkness. Scripture makes it clear, however, that the enemy host is no match for the Lord who has "disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him" (Colossians 2:15; Ephesians 1:19-21).

The "therefore" in Ephesians 6:13, means the Christian's enemies are supernatural spiritual forces. Mere human resources will not work, which is why one must take up the whole armor of God. The divine armor and the sword of the Spirit belong to the Lord Himself and to His Messiah (Isaiah 11:4-5; 59:17) and are made available for believers. Along with the word "stand" in Ephesians 6:11, believers are to *withstand* the enemy and to *stand firm*. Later in verse 13, Paul portrays Christians as soldiers in a battle, holding the line fast against the enemy's charge. Paul (in Ephesians 6:16) identifies this whole age as evil days ("evil day"), yet the outbreak of the Satanic onslaught against Christ's people ebbs and flows throughout this era until the final day when the Lord of Hosts

will return in power and great glory (Luke 21:27) to rend the heavens and rescue His people forever.

“The only way to fight against Satan, his minions, and sin is through the classic mode of spiritual warfare.”

Ephesians 6:1-17 actually teaches the Christian what it means to stand firm. Paul reiterates the charge to stand in the face of dreaded spiritual enemies because the Lord has not left His people defenseless. They have the complete armor of God from head to foot, which consists of the belt, breast-

plate, shoes, shield, helmet, and sword. These are metaphors for the spiritual resources given to them in Christ, namely, the truth, righteousness, gospel, faith, salvation, and the Word of God.

In Ephesians 6:14, Paul—with the rousing order, “stand”—urges the Ephesians to withstand the enemy (verses 11, 13), and not give in to fear. Paul exhorts his readers to always be ready to proclaim the Gospel (verse 15). And in Ephesians 6:17, the flaming darts are burning arrows designed to destroy wooden shields and other defenses, but the Shield of Faith is able to extinguish the devil’s attacks. The spiritual nature of the Church’s resource is nowhere more plain than in its reliance upon God’s Word, which is the only offensive weapon mentioned in this list of spiritual armor. The Word of God is to be wielded like a sharp two-edged sword, in the mighty power of God’s Holy Spirit (Hebrews 4:12).

Paul (in Ephesians 6:18-20) is teaching about being constant in prayer. This section offers instruction on prayer (the main weapon in spiritual warfare) and explains when, how, and for whom to pray. The weapons for warfare are spiritual because they are rooted in prayer, which is the Christian’s most powerful resource. Prayer is to permeate believers’ lives as a universal practice, as

seen by the use of “*all*” four times in this verse: “at all times”, “with all prayer”, “with all perseverance”, and “for all the saints”. Prayer in the Spirit is a form of worship (John 4:23-24) enabled by the Spirit of God, who intercedes on behalf of the person praying and/or for whomever they’re praying.

The general character of the believer’s prayer life is described in the following way in Ephesians 6:18. First “*all prayer and supplication*” focuses on the variety; second “*always*” focuses on the frequency (Romans 12:12; Philippians 4:6; 1st Thessalonians 5:17); “*in the Spirit*” focuses on submission, as we line up with the will of God (Romans 8:26-27), “*being watchful*” focuses on the manner (Matthew 26:41; Mark 13:33); “*all perseverance*” focuses on the persistence (Luke 11:9; 18:7-8), and “*all saints*” focuses on the objects (1 Samuel 12:23).

Understanding the Role Spiritual Warfare Plays in Spiritual Growth is Vital

As technology continues to increase, along with the growing interest in atheism, Satanism, and every other “ism”, the Christian needs to learn that he/she lives in a world that is not only rapidly changing, but one in which they are in a war for the souls of mankind. The reality of this war has already been described in the previous section, when we examined Ephesians 6:10-18. The reality is that many Christians rely too much on themselves and not enough on the grace of God. Paul clearly calls believers to stand firm, not in their own effort or ability, but in the grace of God (Ephesians 6:10-18). As our culture becomes less identified as Christian and more identified with secular philosophy, the believer will need to learn the importance of the role of spiritual warfare in spiritual growth.

The only way to fight against Satan, his minions, and sin is through the classic mode of spiritual warfare. In a culture that rejects truth and has abandoned its moral foundation, there are even more reasons today than ever before for Christians to stand firm in the grace of God. The Christian is engaged in a

war because of the identity he/she has in Christ. Satan despises, rejects, and counters every single action God the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit take to redeem man from sin. The truth, then, is that while the Christian is engaged in a war, the Lord has not left His children without tools to fight against Satan, his minions, and sin. The tools Jesus has given believers are His Word, the Holy Spirit, the Church, brothers and sisters in Christ, and the ability to come to boldly before God in prayer.

Ultimately One's View of Sanctification Will Affect One's View of Spiritual Warfare

The reality of the war for the souls of mankind is real, and so are the tools the Lord has given His children. When the believer stands firm in the grace of God—because of the work of Jesus on the Cross—no weapon formed against him/her will prosper. Satan is a defeated foe because of Christ. Jesus has disarmed the forces of Satan through His death, burial, and resurrection (Colossians 1). The Gospel is good news because as Christians engage a sinful world, Christ is with them. Christians are not attacked as if they are on an island; rather they are attacked because of their identity with their Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. The believer can then rest in the fact that as he/she rests and stands firm in the grace of God, that the Lord will guard and protect him/her. True effectiveness for Jesus and His glory rests in reliance upon the grace of God in all things.

Note: This article was originally published by Dave Jenkins at Blue Letter Bible and servantsofgrace.org.

Spiritual Warfare and the Sufficiency of Scripture

By Dave Jenkins

In Matthew 4, Jesus is confronted by Satan in the desert.

In this story, we learn how Jesus used Scripture in spiritual warfare against Satan. Today, I want us to look at Matthew 4:1-11. This temptation is an attempt by Satan to subvert God's plan for human redemption by causing Jesus to fall into sin and disobedience, and thus disqualify Him as the sinless Savior.

Matthew 4:1 says that "*Jesus was led up by the Spirit.*" The Holy Spirit guided Jesus in His earthly life, providing a pattern for His followers to be empowered and led by the Holy Spirit (Galatians 5:16-18). The Greek word for tempted (*perirazo*) can also mean "test". While God never tempts anyone to do evil (James 1:13), He does use circumstances of all types to test a person's character (Hebrews 11:17). *Diablos* (in Greek, meaning *slander*, or *accuser*) is here preceded



by the definite article to indicate the *one who tempts*. Although the devil intended to thwart God's plan and purposes, the Father uses this evil intention for the good purpose of strengthening Jesus in His messianic role.

Jesus fasted "*forty days and forty nights*" according to Matthew 4:2. Jesus' experience of 40 days of fasting in the wilderness corresponds to Israel's experience of 40 years of testing in the wilderness (Deuteronomy 8:2-3). Jesus endured His testing victoriously and obediently. Moses also fasted and prayed for 40 days and nights on two occasions (Exodus 24:18, 24:28). Fasting was a means of focusing intently on prayer. Forty days is also about the longest a human can fast without permanent bodily harm.

In Matthew 4:3, Satan begins by saying, "*If you are the Son of God...*" in an attempt to get Jesus to prove Himself. Jesus was and is the Son of God, but He refused to be tricked by the devil into using His divine prerogatives to make the trial any easier for Himself. Jesus obeyed as a man—as the representative for all who believe—so as to fulfill all righteousness (Matthew 3:15) on behalf of His people. In Matthew 4:4, Jesus replies to Satan by saying: "*It is written...*" and thus responding to each temptation by quoting from Deuteronomy, linking His experience to Israel's in the desert. In Deuteronomy 8:2, Moses reminds the Israelites of God's testing through hunger and His miraculous provision of manna.

Satan's next stop was the holy city is Jerusalem, to the pinnacle of the temple, which is in the southeast corner of the temple area, the top of which was some 300 feet above the floor of the Kidron Valley (Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities* 15.411-412). The devil's use of Matthew 4:6-7, a quotation from Psalm 91, is a blatant misuse of Scripture, used in an effort to manipulate Jesus. Such a spectacular display as jumping from this great height unharmed would have gained Him an enthusiastic following, but it wouldn't have followed the Father's messianic and redemptive plan of suffering and proclaiming the Kingdom of Heaven.

Satan tells Jesus in Matthew 4:9 to "*fall down and worship me.*" The devil

offers a shortcut to Jesus' future reign in God's kingdom— a shortcut that sidesteps Jesus' redemptive work on the Cross and comes at the cost of exchanging the love of the Father for the worship of Satan. Satan's words, "*all these I will give you*" is a lie.

Matthew 4:11 records that the "*devil left him*". Jesus resisted the devil by standing firm on God's Word, setting an example for His followers. Angels came and were ministering to Him, which included much needed physical sustenance. All of Heaven knew the significance of Jesus' initial victory in this cosmic battle.

What We Can Learn from Matthew 4:1-11

The main lesson we learn from this passage is Jesus' use of Scripture in battling Satan. As noted above, Jesus quotes from Deuteronomy in order to fight against Satan. The believer must study to show him or herself approved as a workman; not ashamed and also able to handle and interpret the Word of God with precision and great care.

Jesus quotes Scripture and says "*it is written*" four times. How do you fight against sin and temptation? Do you quote Scripture related to your specific temptation and struggle against sin, or do you rely on yourself? Jesus gives His disciples an example of One who fought against sin and Satan by quoting Scripture.

James 4:7 and 1st Peter 5:8 are instructive for believers because they teach the importance of humility and submission to God. The believer who rests in the finished work of Christ will be able to fight against sin and temptation and make much of Him in and through their lives. The only way that the believer in Christ can ward off Satan's accusations and attacks is to go back to who they already are in Him. This means that, as the believer grows in Christ, they increasingly grow in the knowledge of who they already are in Him— adopted, redeemed, and sanctified (not yet glorified), which grants them the ability to stand

(not perfectly) in the grace of God.

Knowing a lot of the Bible and being able to recite Scripture verses from

“Jesus’ use of Scripture in spiritual warfare demonstrates that Satan is no match against the Word of God.”

memory are very good tools in the believers’ battle against sin, Satan, and the world. These tools, however, are often treated as the ultimate thing in spiritual warfare, when in fact they are not. The message that contains the power of God to save and sanctify *is* the Gospel, which means only the Gospel—and not a

tool—is ultimate. The Gospel calls believers away from self and to Christ in order to put off the flesh and to put on the Lord Jesus Christ.

This teaching has huge implications on our daily lives as believers. It highlights the various ways in which we often fail to appropriate the truth of who we are in Him (adopted, justified, and positionally sanctified), by exposing the fact that we are prone to embrace our sinful habits instead of putting our sin to death, and putting on the Lord Jesus Christ. The believer’s identity in Christ ought to motivate him/her to not only put sin to death, but also to appropriate His life into all of life.

The identification of the believer with Christ in His death and resurrection frees him/her from hypocrisy so the believer can be who he/she really is in Christ. The failure then to appropriate who we are in Christ exposes our attitude towards sin, which in turn demonstrates our apathy towards it. Jesus was tempted in every way, and yet never sinned, which means that, as His followers, we ought to look to, meditate upon, and run to the cross daily.

Jesus’ use of Scripture in spiritual warfare demonstrates that Satan is no match against the Word of God. The Word of God testifies to the truth about

who Jesus is and what He has done in His death, burial, and resurrection. Christians ought to take what they know about Scripture and appropriate that knowledge daily into their lives, as they fight against Satan, sin, and the world. Believers ought to do battle every day—in fact, every moment—against sin, the flesh, and the world, which means they need to daily preach the Truth about who Jesus is and what He has done to themselves. The believer needs to do this (preach the Gospel to him/herself) so he/she will be able to resist sin when tempted and stand in the grace of God.

Conclusion

Jesus' engagement with Satan in the wilderness and His use of Scripture is instructive to believers on many fronts. First, Jesus teaches believers that they can only overcome by appropriating the truth of who they already are in Him. Second, Jesus teaches the supremacy and sufficiency of His Word by speaking that Truth of His Word while confronting Satan. Thirdly, Jesus' use of Scripture calls believers to use the Word of God in order to expose the inconsistencies and lies of Satan by pointing his (Satan's) followers to Jesus. Fourthly, Jesus' use of Scripture is instructive to His people, because He alone grants His people the gift of His righteousness, in order that the Holy Spirit may illuminate His Word to them individually as they read and study it, and corporately in the context of the local Church, as believers gather to hear the Word of God preached. Finally, Jesus demonstrates in the desert that only the Word of God provides the fount from which the believer can draw from in order to put sin to death and put on the Lord Jesus in all of life.

Recommended Reading on Spiritual Warfare and Modern-day Deliverance Ministries

In this issue of *Theology for Life Magazine*, we've been considering spiritual warfare and the dangers of the modern-day deliverance ministry. We understand that we haven't covered everything on this topic, but it is our prayer that readers of this issue will grow in their understanding of it so they can stand fast on the Word of God.

If you've found this issue helpful and would like to study this subject further, please check out the following reading list. These books are at the top of their genre in both excellence and readability.

- *Praying Backwards* by Bryan Chapell.
- *The Prayer of the Lord* by R.C. Sproul.
- *A Call to Prayer* by J.C. Ryle
- *Power Encounters: Reclaiming Spiritual Warfare* by David Powlison
- *Precious Remedies Against Satan's Devices* by Thomas Brooks
- *Fighting Satan: Knowing His Weaknesses, Strategies, and Defeat* by Joel Beeke
- *Not Against Flesh and Blood* by Martyn Lloyd-Jones
- *The Spirit and the Church* by John Owen

I hope you'll find these resources helpful as I have.

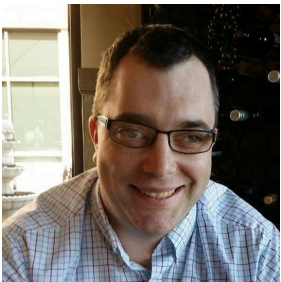
In Christ Alone,

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Executive Editor, *Theology for Life Magazine*



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