

Spiritual Warfare

Part 1

Introduction

Never before has so much of the world been at war—nation against nation, culture against culture, brother against brother. Yet as far-reaching as this natural warfare is, it doesn't compare to a much more extensive war in the spiritual realm. We don't have to read very far into the New Testament before we realize that much of it is written from the point of view that we live in a world which conducts business as usual against the backdrop of a fierce war waging between two kingdoms—Christ's kingdom of light and Satan's domain, the kingdom of darkness. It is a war in which we Christians have an important role to play.

Our Study

Paul lived in a time when the Romans controlled most, if not all, of the civilized world. After they conquered nations, they left behind a strong occupational army to keep order and hold down rebellion. In other words, this occupational army enforced the victory the Romans had already won. Members of the Roman army were very much in evidence everywhere. It was from this natural army that Paul drew many of his illustrations in his teachings. However, he warns us that we are not fighting an earthly enemy so we cannot use natural weapons to fight our spiritual battles.

Did you know that when you became a Christian, you were drafted into the Lord's army?

The Scripture: 2 Timothy 2:3, 4

"Endure hardship with us like a good soldier of Christ Jesus. No one serving as a soldier gets involved in civilian affairs--he wants to please his commanding officer."

1. To what does the Apostle Paul compare Timothy? _____

2. What is a good soldier expected to do? _____

It should not surprise us that we are expected to endure hardships. The life of a soldier on the battlefield is not an easy one.

3. Who does a soldier want to please? _____

Like Timothy, we are foot soldiers in the Lord's army and our chief goal is to please our commander-in-chief.

The Scripture: 2 Corinthians 10:3, 4

"For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ."

4. What does Paul say he does not do? _____

5. What kind of weapons does he use? _____

6. What can they do? _____

As powerful as the weapons developed by the world's munitions makers are, they can never compare with the spiritual weapons issued to us by our commander-in-chief. Every army on earth has a commander-in-chief. The same is true of the spiritual armies of heaven and hell. We're now going to look at both the enemy commander and his forces and The One who leads us.

The Scripture: Ezekiel 28:14-19

"You were the model of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty. You were anointed as a guardian cherub; for so I ordained you.... You were blameless in your ways from the day you were created till wickedness was found in you. Through your widespread trade, you were filled with violence, and you sinned. So I drove you in disgrace from the mount of God, and I expelled you, O guardian cherub.... Your heart became proud on account of your beauty, and you corrupted your wisdom because of your splendor. So I threw you to the earth."

This is one of the few scriptures in the Bible that tells of Satan's beginnings.

7. Describe Satan as God created him. _____

8. What caused Satan's downfall? _____

9. What did God do to him? _____

There was a terrible war between God's forces and the forces led by Satan. We have a picture of this war in the book of Revelation.

The Scripture: Revelation 12:7-9

"There was a war in heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon and his angels fought back. But he was not strong enough, and they lost their place in heaven. The great dragon was hurled down—that ancient serpent called the devil or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him."

10. Where did the war take place? _____

11. Who was with Michael? _____

Satan's pride was so strong that he challenged the God who created him. Other verses in the Bible tell us that one third of all the angels sided with him.

12. What eventually happened to Satan? _____

13. What does Satan do? _____

14. Satan is called by many different names. What are the four given in this scripture? _____

The Scripture: John 12:31

"Now is the time for judgment on this world; now the prince of this world will be driven out."

15. What does Jesus call Satan in this verse? _____

The Scripture: 1 Peter 5:8

"Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour."

16. What does the Apostle Peter call him? _____

Other names for Satan given in the Bible are Beelzebub, god of this age, prince or ruler of the kingdom of the air, the adversary, Lucifer, Abaddon, the satanic angel of the bottomless pit.

The Bible also tells us much about Satan's and his demons' character and their powers. Let's look at a few of them.

The Scripture: 2 Corinthians 4:4

"The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God."

17. What has Satan done? _____

The Scripture: 2 Corinthians 11:14

"Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light."

18. What can Satan do? _____

Is it any wonder that so many are confused about Jesus and the Bible today?

The Scripture: Matthew 13:19

"When anyone hears the message about the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart."

19. What does Jesus say the evil one does? _____

This is one reason why it is so important that new Christians receive sound teaching as soon as possible.

The Scripture: Hebrews 2:14

"By His [Jesus'] death He [destroyed] him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil."

20. Who holds the power of death? _____

Satan is not the silly-looking creature with horns and a pitch fork, wearing red pajamas as he is often painted. Other scripture describes him as crafty, presumptuous, malignant, cruel, deceitful, powerful, cowardly, wicked, violent, and the cause of much illness. He tempts people to sin, can enter into people and can hinder us in our Christian activities.

If we were to stop here, we might easily fall into despair. How can we ever hope to battle against so powerful an enemy? But as powerful as Satan is, he is no match for our leader, the Lord Jesus Christ. It is time to look at some of the scripture that tells us who Jesus is.

The Scripture: John 1:1-3

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through Him all things were made, without Him nothing was made that has been made."

In these verses the Apostle John calls Jesus the Word.

21. What does he tell us about Jesus? _____

The Scripture: Hebrews 1:3

"The Son...[sustains] all things by His powerful word."

22. What else does Jesus (the Son) do? _____

Not only is Jesus the creator of the world, He also holds everything together.

The Scripture: Colossians 1:13,14

"He has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son He loves in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins."

23. What has God through Jesus rescued us from? _____

24. Where has He brought us? _____

25. What have we received from Jesus? _____

This is only a small part of what Jesus did for us when He died on the cross. He also dealt a death blow to Satan and his activities.

The Scripture: 1 John 3:8

"The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work."

26. Why did Jesus come? _____

The Scripture: Revelation 1:18

In the book of Revelation John describes a vision of Jesus as He is today in heaven. John was so afraid he fell at Jesus' feet as though dead. Jesus told him not to be afraid, and then said:

"I am the Living One; I was dead, and behold I am alive forever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and Hades."

27. What does Jesus hold? _____

Some versions of the Bible translate the word Hades as hell.

The Scripture: Colossians 2:15

"Having disarmed the powers and authorities, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross."

28. What else did Jesus do? _____

These powers and authorities refer to Satan and his hierarchy. Jesus has already won the war. However, as in any war, there are always pockets of rebellion left that go on fighting against their victors. This is the case in God's and our war with Satan. Jesus has already done His part. Now He has given us the job of enforcing the victory. And He has given us the authority and the weapons with which to do it.

In Part 2 of Spiritual Warfare we will look at this God-given authority and learn what God teaches us about making spiritual warfare.

The Answers

1. A soldier
2. Endure hardship
3. His commanding officer
4. Wage war as the world does
5. Weapons that have divine power
6. Demolish strongholds, arguments, every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ
7. Model of perfection, full of wisdom, perfect in beauty, anointed guardian cherub, blameless in his ways
8. Pride
9. Expelled him from the mount of God
10. In heaven
11. His angels
12. He was hurled to earth, along with his angels.
13. Leads the world astray
14. The dragon, the serpent, the devil, Satan
15. Prince of this world
16. Your enemy the devil
17. Blinded the minds of unbelievers, so they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ
18. Masquerade as an angel of light
19. Snatches away the message from the hearts of those who do not understand it
20. The devil
21. He is God; He has existed since the beginning; through Him all things were made.
22. Sustains all things by His powerful word
23. The dominion of darkness
24. Into the kingdom of the Son He loves
25. Redemption, the forgiveness of sins
26. To destroy the devil's work
27. The keys of death and Hades
28. Disarmed the powers and authorities

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