



### **SPIRITUAL WARFARE – Part One – The Importance of Looking at What the Bible Says**

Recently, a friend of mine asked me to read a book on liberation in the life of a Christian. He wanted to know my opinion on the book. So while Sandy and I went on vacation, I read the book. It was written by an orthodox evangelical author who had credentials from several Baptist seminaries. The basic purpose of the book states that it is a text book for “those desiring to learn biblical truths about wounded, fragmented personalities and demonic---spiritual warfare.” The book promotes itself as “a self-help counseling book, and an instruction book for those desiring to learn how to help hurting people find freedom, peace, and joy!”

The book looks at scripture accounts involving demons in both the Old and New Testaments. It gives instructions on how to “reclaim ground that Satan has taken”. It promotes the idea that demons can be inherited from sinful ancestors; and that sometimes sinful behavior can be explained by generational iniquities passed down from generation to generation. The book claims that demons have legal authority to play havoc in our lives and that through the right processes believers can reclaim spiritual ground from the enemy and receive freedom, peace and joy.” A foundational premise of the book is that Satan and the evil realm have the authority to harangue and harass the believer.

The Bible does not support that claim. The book then gives numerous anecdotal accounts of troubled Christians who have been “demonized” to the point of being hopelessly bound in sin and emotional dysfunction. This sin and dysfunction is explained as being demon generated. The book stops short of saying that Christians can be demon possessed, but it gives account after account of Christians being what the author calls “demonized. The more I read the book, it became apparent to me that the author is really talking about believers being indwelt and influenced by one or more demons. This described “demonization” is nothing short of demon possession. You will learn in the coming weeks that scripture supports no such notion.

Something about this premise did not pass what we lawyers like to call the “smell test”. Something just didn’t seem right. My mind raced and my spirit became troubled trying to sort through the massive amount of information in the book. This led me to begin a deep biblical search in this subject matter. Over the next few weeks , we will look at exactly what the Bible does in fact says about Spiritual Warfare in general and about demons and their influence on believers (if any) in particular.

Much has been written in Christian circles over the last few decades about spiritual warfare. It is common to hear about people “binding Satan and his demons” in the name of Jesus. Many authors claim that ancestral demons can be passed on from generation to generation. They give scripture that they believe supports this idea. As I read the book, I felt that I had to learn the answers to such questions as: Is it the demon of lust that causes a person to lust and fall into sexual sin? Is there a demon of adultery? Is there a demon of laziness? Can prayer exorcise a city? Can Christians be cursed? Can demons make you sin? Can pagan objects haunt you or bring a curse into or on your home? Over the next few weeks we’ll be looking at not what I think, but at what the Bible really says about all of these questions. I think the first step we need to take is coming to a firm realization that you and I are in a spiritual war.



### **Knowing You Are In a War**

During the Civil War, the first real battle was called the 1st Battle of Bull Run (or Manassas by the Confederacy). It was fought very close to Washington DC and when the battle seemed imminent, many of the citizenry of Washington wanted to go out and see what they thought was going to be a bloodless skirmish. Senators and their wives along with many others came in carriages and coaches and brought their picnic lunches with them. Several women set up sales areas and sold cakes and pies. People went to the gathering as they would go today to a football game or a soccer match.

At first, the Union army put on a show. They appeared to be pushing the South right off of the battlefield, but then the tide turned. With brave maneuvers and lightning speed, the Confederate leadership turned on the unprepared Union army. The Confederates stood firm in battle. The momentum changed. Thomas Jackson, a former professor at VMI, ran into a gap in the line, he stopped, and he stood firm. He faced the enemy square in the face and he didn't flinch. Someone shouted out, "Look, men, there is Jackson standing like a stone wall!". From then on he would become known as "Stonewall Jackson".

Bullets began to fly. Cannons began to roar, and in an instant the Union troops panicked in fear. As confusion and fear filled the Union troops, everyone began to panic and run. As soldiers began dying in front of the spectators, people were horrified. Suddenly they began to realize they were not observing a football match, rather they were in the middle of a war. By the end of the day, 2,800 Union troops had been blown apart, blown through, and laid dead on the field. Why have I told this war story? Because the spectators that went out to have a picnic and they didn't understand that they were in the middle of a full blown war. **AND THAT IS MANY OF US.**

Like those spectators, many Christians have no awareness that they are in fact in the midst of a war. Whether you want to be or not, as a Christian, you are caught up in a desperate cosmic conflict. The arena of war centers on us as believers and our relationship with God. Satan is the opposition along with his fallen angel followers that we call demons. This opposition army

has already lost the final war as they have been condemned to the lake of fire. (Matt 25:41). However, the sentencing has been suspended until the end of the ages. According to Dr. Robby Dean, author of *Spiritual Warfare*, “Between the pronouncement of that verdict and the execution of the sentence lies the entire panorama of human history.” You my friend are somewhere in that panorama of history.



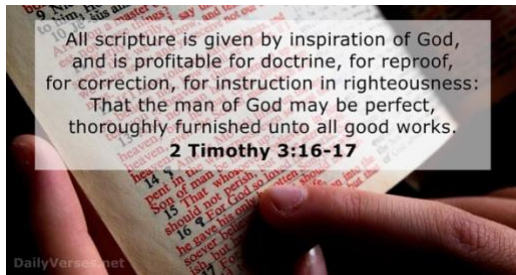
### **We Are on The Winning Side**

When you came to a saving knowledge of Jesus, without knowing it, you declared yourself to be a warrior in the conflict. The Bible is clear that Satan is the Prince of the Power of the Air (Ephesians 2:2) and the “god” of this age. (2 Cor 4:4). The good news is that the Bible gives clear instructions on how you and I can be effective warriors in the fight. We are not helpless weaklings who are subject to the whims of evil forces, rather we are as Paul describes us “more than conquerors” in Christ Jesus. (Romans 8:31-39). And the great news is that God has graciously bestowed on His children every spiritual asset we would ever need to be victorious in the conflict. (Ephesians 1:3). This is what Dr Dean calls our “positional strength in Christ”. It is a battle position. We have the “high ground”. Whether we know it or not, we are dealing from a superior position. We have the complete revelation of God in the Bible, and we have the Holy Spirit within us that indwells us, guides us, teaches us, fills us, illuminates us and empowers us to overcome the enemy in the war in which we fight.



### **We Will Overcome By the Very Power of God**

It is a situation much like David v. Goliath. Remember David was the puny ill-equipped shepherd boy who found himself in a fight to the death with Goliath of the Phillistines. David did not rely on his own resources, rather he chose to lean on divine resources. One of the most inspiring accounts in the Bible is the little young David looking up at the giant that appeared to have every human advantage he could have. David was clearly the underdog in the fight, and yet he boldly confronted Goliath, and in the moment of battle he shouted that it was God’s strength with which he intended to do in the giant. The text reads, “*Then David said to the Philistine, “You come to me with a sword, a spear, and a javelin, but I come to you in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have taunted.”* (1 Samuel 17:45 NASB). In this same way, we are supplied spiritual weaponry that is above and beyond our own capabilities. We do not have to rely on our own resources, but on the spiritual resources that God promises in His Word. We will be looking at that weaponry and we will be learning how to use it effectively. When we finish this course, you will know how to distinguish between the biblical weapons that God gives us to fight and the superstitions and suppositions of man.



## The Believer Enjoys The Ultimate Intelligence

In determining biblical fact concerning Spiritual Warfare, the Bible is the only source of fact in understanding the fight that we are in and how to engage and win in that fight. Second Timothy 3:16-17 tells us, <sup>16</sup>*All Scripture is inspired by God and is*

*profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness;* <sup>17</sup>*so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.* (2 Timothy 3:16-17 NASB) This verse tells us three important things:

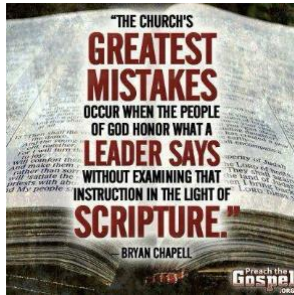
**1 The source of the Bible is God** – this is not a book written by men about their spiritual experiences. It is a book authored by God through men to communicate divine truth to us concerning every area of our life. The scriptures were inspired by God. (Greek *theopneustos* means “god breathed”). The scriptures were in fact inspired in original languages and the message God intended to communicate was communicated. Scholars look to the original languages to determine accurately what is being communicated. Peter says, <sup>20</sup>*But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one’s own interpretation,* <sup>21</sup>*for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.* (2 Peter 1:20)

**2 The Bible is Absolute Truth** - Because the Bible is absolute truth, it is profitable to teach us, correct our thinking, to reprove us or reprimand us for wrong thinking and living, and to instruct us. In Jesus’ prayer on the night before He was crucified He said, <sup>17</sup>*Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth.* (John 17:17 NASB) It is the Word of God alone that gives us the truth we need to live out our lives according to His purposes and plan.

**3 The Purpose of the Word** – the verse tells us that scripture has everything in it (it is adequate) to equip us in every single way including how to deal with spiritual warfare. The verse says that the man or woman of God is “thoroughly equipped” for every good work. The Greek word *artios* means “fit, complete, capable, and sufficient”. This word was used in the ancient world to describe a ship that was totally outfitted and rigged to take on the voyage that had been determined. We too find the sails, the blocks, the tackle, the mast, and every other thing needed to make the journey God has outlined for us. It is in the Bible and we can rely on it. This sufficiency of God’s Word is spoken of as well in 2 Peter 1:3-4

<sup>3</sup>*seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence.* <sup>4</sup>*For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, so that by them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust.* (1 Peter 1:3-4 NASB)

Many Christians do not see the Bible as sufficient truth upon which to build their lives. This is especially true in the realm of spiritual warfare. They rely on experiences and sources outside of the Bible to create their ideas of spiritual warfare and how to deal with it.



### Drifting from Scripture

In recent years sensationalist material has abounded. Much has been written on “binding demons” or “taking dominion” over Satan or giving people special instructions for dealing with so-called “territorial spirits”. We must ask ourselves if these are scriptural concepts, and if so, what do they mean? We must search the scriptures to see what form spiritual warfare takes and the Bible should be our only source for knowledge to determine how we are to deal with it.

The two passages we just reviewed (2 Tim 3:15-16 and 2 Peter 1:3-4) teach us that the Bible has given us everything we need to know in recognizing and dealing with any situation that might arise in our lives. This would of course include spiritual warfare and how we deal with it. Please realize I’m not saying that we shouldn’t go to school, etc. to learn truth about various disciplines (engineering, mathematics, grammar, accounting, etc). The Bible is truth, but not all truth is in the Bible. The Bible claims to provide absolute truth in all areas of the Christian life and spirituality. Reliance on experience in spiritual matters is dicey. It is dangerous because it searches for truth outside of the objective truth we find in God’s Word.

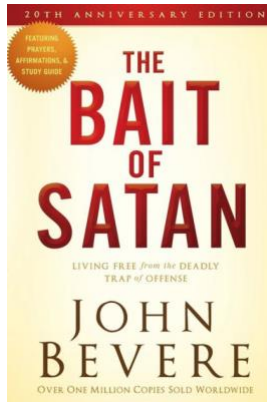
### A Broad Summary of Spiritual Warfare

We will learn through scripture that spiritual warfare originates in three areas: The world, the flesh, and the Devil. There are two primary errors when it comes to spiritual warfare – over emphasis and underemphasis. Some blame every sin, problem, conflict, broken car on demons that need to be cast out. This is errant. Others completely ignore the war that is going on. They are like the observers at the Battle of Bull Run. They completely ignore the spiritual realm and the fact that the Bible tells us that our battle is not against “flesh and blood”. The key to understanding and engaging in spiritual warfare is understanding exactly what the Bible says about these matters.

**The world is broken.** It was broken when man sinned. As a consequence, death, disease, and disaster entered the world. This includes the law of entropy. Things are just falling apart and breaking down. When your battery dies on your car after 4-5 years, it is not a demon. It is a worn out battery. Another aspect of “the world” is the human viewpoint that is brought into the world which excludes the possibility of God. This is sometimes called “humanism”. It promises solutions that are often “at enmity” with God. That means they run counter to God’s solutions and are at war with divine viewpoint.

### The Flesh is Still in There

I've told you in the last few weeks that when we come to Christ we are indwelt by the Holy Spirit, but the old sin nature we were born with remains in us. As we yield to the Holy Spirit we keep the flesh under control. The flesh with its passions and lusts remains deep within us and likewise is a war with the things of God.



### **The Evil Realm/The Devil**

This third flank of attack in the war includes Satan and his fallen angels (demons) that are loose on the earth. They wreak havoc. They harass and harangue. They create chaos and disorder. They are real but they are never to be feared, because He that is in us is greater than he that is in the world. (1 John 4:4)

Let's enter this study with a victorious attitude. We ARE on the winning side. Let's put stock in what the Bible says, and let's not fall into the trap of listening to those who have dealt in the occult and those who focus on experiences. Don't read this sermon feeling defeated. It is absolutely exciting to receive the biblical truth that we are not the conquered, rather we are the conquerors. You plus God are a majority.

Let us pray.

Note: This week's sermon was not edited as our editor is enjoying time off with her husband.

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