

Introduction To Spiritual Warfare

Introduction

- A. The purpose of this paper is to present an outline, with Bible passages, that would serve as an informative introduction to that aspect of the Christian life which is called “spiritual warfare.”
- B. The Bible clearly states that every believer has an Adversary. To reject, ignore or minimize this truth is not only an act of disobedience to God but it will also leave a person vulnerable to the enemy and without protection.

Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that your brothers throughout the world are undergoing the same kind of sufferings. 1 Peter 5:8,9

I. The Reality of the Spiritual World.

- A. Only God is eternal. He is spirit, unchangeable in character, the fullness of holiness, love, truth, and is a trinity of persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory for ever and ever. Amen. 1 Timothy 1:17

God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth. John 4:24

Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows. James 1:17

They called out in a loud voice, "How long, Sovereign Lord, holy and true, until you judge the inhabitants of the earth and avenge our blood?" Rev 6:10

Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love. 1 John 4:8

And I (Jesus Christ) will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever--the Spirit of truth. John 14:16,17A

- B. God chose to create people (angels and the human race), the universe and mankind. It is important to understand that nothing in creation is a part of God. All creation is of a different kind of being (finite), and is totally dependent on God for existence.

- 1. God chose to create angels.

Angels are personal spirits. While not material, and therefore invisible to our eyes, they can, in the will of God, assume bodies as a means of revelation and work.

Angels were created to worship and serve the Lord Jesus.

Praise him, all his angels, praise him, all his heavenly hosts... Let them praise the name of the LORD, for he commanded and they were created. Psalms 148:2,5

And again, when God brings his firstborn into the world, he says, "Let all God's angels worship him." Hebrews 1:6

Angels apparently were created with free will and into a probationary period. It seems that a mighty angel, probably one given the leadership in the worship of the Lord Jesus, wanted some of the adoration and therefore became sinful. He was cast out of Heaven and placed under condemnation. We know him today by the name of Satan and Devil. Apparently he led a large number of the angels into the same sin.

How you have fallen from heaven, O morning star, son of the dawn! You have been cast down to the earth, you who once laid low the nations! You said in your heart, "I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God; I will sit enthroned on the mount of assembly, on the utmost heights of the sacred mountain. I will ascend above the tops of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High." But you are brought down to the grave, to the depths of the pit. Isaiah 14:12-15 (See also Ezekiel 28:11-19)

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. Rev 12:9

His tail swept a third of the stars out of the sky and flung them to the earth. The dragon stood in front of the woman who was about to give birth, so that he might devour her child the moment it was born. Revelation 12:4

Satan through hatred of God, and particularly the Lord Jesus, developed an elaborate kingdom (Kingdom of Darkness) to carry out his work of hatred.

2. God chose to create the universe and the human race.

Mankind was created in the image of God and placed in the Garden of Eden. Adam and Eve were created with free-will and given an opportunity to choose for or against God. If they chose against God they would suffer death (spiritual, physical and eternal).

So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. Genesis 1:27

The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it. And the LORD God commanded the man, "You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die." Genesis 2:15-17

C. God chose to allow Satan to tempt Adam and Eve.

Satan saw a way of taking revenge against the Lord Jesus by tempting mankind to sin. He knew if he could do this it would separate them from their Creator and bring them under his control.

Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God really say, 'You must not eat from any tree in the garden'?" The woman said to the serpent, "We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, but God did say, 'You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.'" "You will not surely die," the serpent said to the woman.

"For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves. Genesis 3:1-7

Adam and Eve chose to sin against God. Their disobedience caused them to be separated from God and brought them under some control of the enemy in that they had obeyed him. The Lord God sought them out, explained what happened, gave them instructions as to how to protect themselves from Satan, and what effects their sin would have upon them.

So the LORD God said to the serpent, "Because you have done this, "Cursed are you above all the livestock and all the wild animals! You will crawl on your belly and you will eat dust all the days of your life. And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel." To the woman he said, "I will greatly increase your pains in childbearing; with pain you will give birth to children. Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you."

To Adam he said, "Because you listened to your wife and ate from the tree about which I commanded you, 'You must not eat of it,' "Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat of it all the days of your life. It will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the plants of the field. By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return." Genesis 3:14-19

Adam had been made a representative of the entire future human race. Therefore, when he sinned the whole human race fell in him and inherited his fallen condition.

Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned. Romans 5:12

God in His mercy promised to Adam and all mankind a remedy for their sin. The remedy would be in the form of a person who would, like Adam, be able to represent the entire race, pay the penalty for their sin, and defeat their enemy Satan.

And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel." Genesis 3:15

For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous. Romans 5:19

Now that Satan had a large measure of control over the human race He sought to develop his kingdom even further. By error and sin he was able to thoroughly infiltrate the human race, govern their culture, blind them to the continuing revelation of God, and incapacitate to a large degree those who chose to reject him and turn to God for mercy and forgiveness.

As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath. Ephesians 2:1-3

So I tell you this, and insist on it in the Lord, that you must no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their thinking. They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts. Having lost all sensitivity, they have given themselves over to sensuality so as to indulge in every kind of impurity, with a continual lust for more. Ephesians 4:17-19

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. 2 Corinthians 4:4

Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that your brothers throughout the world are undergoing the same kind of sufferings. 1 Peter 5:8,9

D. The spiritual (largely invisible) world now became a battleground. God was powerfully developing His Kingdom and Satan was developing his. The Bible gives some information of what the Kingdom of Satan was like.

Satan's kingdom is PERSONAL. It is made up of "persons" i.e. spiritual entities (demons/ wicked spirits) who seek to gain some control of humans through deception, error, and sin by the promise of control, pleasure, and power, for the ultimate purpose of controlling them so the Lord Jesus will be humiliated, the Kingdom of God limited, and Satan's Kingdom advanced.

For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves. Colossians 1:13

In order that Satan might not outwit us. For we are not unaware of his schemes. 2 Corinthians 2:11

2. Satan's kingdom is POWERFUL. While Satan is not sovereign, omnipotent, omniscient, nor omnipresent, he and his demons have been granted a measure of power that they exercise through error, sin, and death under the sovereign control of our Lord. Luke 22:31,32

"Simon, Simon, Satan has asked to sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for you, Simon, that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned back, strengthen your brothers." Luke 22:31,32

3. Satan's kingdom is UNCLEAN. Satan and his demons are by nature and dedication unholy.

And in the synagogue there was a man, which had a spirit of an unclean devil, and cried out with a loud voice... Luke 4:33 (KJV)

4. Satan's kingdom is EVIL. Satan and his demons are by nature wicked, and enjoy the infliction of pain, error, confusion, sickness, and death.

The LORD said to Satan, "Very well, then, everything he has is in your hands, but on the man himself do not lay a finger." Then Satan went out from the presence of the LORD... The LORD said to Satan, "Very well, then, he is in your hands; but you must spare his life." Job 1:12; 2:6

On a Sabbath Jesus was teaching in one of the synagogues, and a woman was there who had been crippled by a spirit for eighteen years. She was bent over and could not straighten up at all. When Jesus saw her, he called her forward and said to her, "Woman, you are set free from your infirmity." Then he put his hands on her, and immediately she straightened up and praised God. Luke 13:10-13

You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desire. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies. John 8:44

5. Satan's kingdom is ORGANIZED. Satan and his demons operate within a hierarchy.

For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. Ephesians 6:12

6. Satan's kingdom is CONDEMNED. Satan and his demons are under divine condemnation.

"What do you want with us, Son of God?" they shouted. "Have you come here to torture us before the appointed time?" Matthew 8:29

"Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. Matthew 25:41

For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but sent them to hell, putting them into gloomy dungeons to be held for judgment. 2 Peter 2:4

And the angels who did not keep their positions of authority but abandoned their own home--these he has kept in darkness, bound with everlasting chains for judgment on the great Day. Jude 6

E. The goal of Satan and his Kingdom of Darkness.

1. The original goal: Satan sought to take the place of the Lord Jesus or equality with Him.
2. The goal of Satan today is to hinder Christians and counterfeit Biblical Christianity.
3. Explanations of that goal and the subtle manner of demonic attack.
 - a. To hinder, deceive and enslave believers in order to produce weakness in the Church and the Kingdom of God. The appeal is to our self-centeredness, pride, fear, elitism, lust, jealousy, covetousness, self-protection, passivity, lack of love, faith, and hope, the desire for control as well as all forms personal error, and neglect of the top priorities of the Bible. In particular all believers are hindered in their prayer life, Bible understanding and study.
 - b. To further enslave, develop allegiance, and gain active participants in strengthening and furthering the kingdom of darkness by the following means.
 - 1). The developing of demonic power sources: legalized abortion, homosexuality, liberalism, drugs, alcohol, promiscuity, pornography, humanism, relativity of truth, and one of the most important – fear and passivity among evangelical Christian leaders and Christians -- so they will downplay the importance of the demonic, and not teach spiritual warfare.

2). The promise/offer of self-centered power, pleasure and control through: hard rock music, violence, drugs, immorality, sexuality, alcohol, materialism, humanism, pantheism, false religions, the New Age movement, occult literature, and the type of false teaching found in television programs with its fantasy and passivity.

F. The spiritual world is not only the real-real world, it is largely in control of the visible world that is known to us through our senses. God is at work in both worlds, powerfully carrying out His plan and Satan is at work in both worlds powerfully at work to hinder, thwart, and counterfeit God's work.

Satan's work among believers is largely hidden, subtle but powerful. He works to lead us into denying his existence or power; teach us to be self-centered; tempt and beguile us into following his temptations; explain away the benefits and power we have in the Lord Jesus; hinder us in our prayer and Bible understanding; exaggerate our pain and trials; push us into spiritual passivity or fanaticism; and counterfeit our thoughts and emotions so we will blame God and ourselves for what he does.

As a result the spiritual world is characterized by conflict and warfare.

IV. THE RESPONSE OF JESUS CHRIST TO SATAN AND THE KINGDOM OF DARKNESS.

- A. Genesis 3:15 -- "History has a built-in hostility."
- B. Job and his trial (Ephesians 6:12) -- The spiritual conflict of two hostile kingdoms.
- C. Luke 4:18,19 -- Jesus Christ came to set the prisoners free.
- D. Luke 9:1,2 -- The Disciples were given authority and power over demons.
- E. Luke 10:1-24 -- The Seventy Two were given authority and power over demons.
- F. Luke 11:20 -- The Kingdom of God is characterized by deliverance from demons.
- G. Colossians 2:15; I John 3:8 -- Jesus Christ defeated/spoiled Satan and his demons.
- H. Ephesians 1:19-23 -- Jesus Christ is now seated in victory over Satan and his demons.
- I. Ephesians 1:19-23; 2:5,6 -- Believers now share the victory over Satan and his demons.
- J. Ephesians 6:10-18 -- Believers are soldiers with armor and are commanded to wear it.
- K. Ephesians 6:10-18 -- Believers are given weapons and held responsible for spiritual warfare.
- L. I Peter 5:8,9 -- Believers are commanded to be self-controlled, vigilant and to fight.
- M. Matthew 16:18 -- Believers, as a Church, are promised victory over Satan and his demons
- N. Ephesians 2:1-3 -- Believers now live in a world-culture largely dominated by Satan.

Conclusion: Do not allow yourself to neglect this important Biblical message. Learn how your enemy is involved in your life and learn how to resist them.

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