

Spiritual Forces of Evil

Spiritual Warfare, Session Two

When World War One broke out, the War Ministry in London, England sent a coded message to one of the British outposts in the inaccessible areas of British controlled Africa saying, “War declared, arrest all enemy aliens in your district.” The prompt reply came back, “Have arrested ten Germans, six Belgians, four Frenchmen, two Italians, three Austrians and an American. Please advise immediately who we are at war with.”

We need to know who the enemy is if we are to be successful in the fight against him. In this session we will take a closer look at Satan and the demonic forces that the church is waging war against. We will also begin to look at our authority in Christ, and how we enter into this battle and exercise the authority He has given to us.

Warm up Question: Do you see yourself as a spiritual warrior? Is it natural and easy for you to rise to conflict, or do you back away from it? Do you think this makes any difference in regard to how you are able to wage war spiritually? Give reasons for your answer.

Last week we saw that there is a real enemy and a real battle that we are engaged in whether we realize it or not. God has not left us unprepared for this battle. He has given us what we need to take our place in the battle and be victorious alongside Him. As Christians, we are called to wage war against the enemy whether we see ourselves as spiritual warriors or not. If we are to fulfill the commission given to Jesus, and which He has also given to us, then we will find ourselves face to face with the opposition. Although there are different gifts and callings in the Body of Christ, we are all drawn into this cosmic conflict and called to be victorious with Christ.

As a way of seeing how Satan influences and uses people for his own ends, let us use as an example the life of Adolph Hitler, a man greatly used by Satan. We will take a look at how his demonic strategies

against the free world were frustrated and overcome.

Know your enemy

Adolf Hitler was only a man, but he was a man who was used by the enemy. Have you ever wondered how the enemy gained such access into his life in order to use him in this way?

Adolf Hitler’s early life was marked by failure. He wanted to be an artist so he applied to study at the Vienna Academy of Fine Arts. Unfortunately, they thought he was not up to their standard so he was rejected. He then applied to the School of Architecture and again was refused. Becoming embittered, resentful and angry against God he turned toward the occult seeking power to change his life. He spent much of his time reading books on Satanism and the occult in the Hofberg Library in Vienna, Austria. In that library was an ancient spear, the Spear of Destiny, which many, including Hitler, believed to be the spear that was thrust into the side of Christ while He was on the cross. Hitler had overheard a tour guide telling his group, “This spear is shrouded in mystery; whoever unlocks its secrets will rule the world.” Trevor Ravenscroft records the eye witness account of Dr. Walter Stein; he said that he had stood beside Hitler as he gazed at the spear. Stein said, “Adolph Hitler stood...like a man in a trance, a man over whom some dreadful magic spell had been cast...He was swaying on his feet as though caught up in some totally inexplicable euphoria...His whole facial appearance and stance appeared transformed as if some mighty spirit now inhabited his very soul.”¹ After some time in Vienna, Hitler moved to Munich where he was brought into deeper levels of the occult. In fact, the original members of the Nazis (The National Socialist Party) were hard-core Satanists. Pastor David Brown wrote an article called: Adolph Hitler’s Occult Connections. In that article he says:

“It was the Nazis who led a willing Hitler into

¹ The Spear of Destiny, Trevor Ravenscroft, G.P.Putnam’s Sons, New York.

deeper levels of occult involvement. In fact, Dietrich Eckart, an occultist of the highest degree, and a practitioner of black magic, bragged before he died; "I have initiated him (Hitler) into the 'Secret Doctrine,' opened his centers of vision and given him the means of communication with the Powers... I shall have influenced history more than any other German."²

The demons that influenced Hitler went on to use him to murder more than six million Jewish people in Europe in his quest to wipe out completely the Jewish nation. If the British and American forces under General Montgomery in Egypt hadn't stopped the German advance eastward across North Africa, the entire population of Jews in Palestine at that time may have been wiped out. In all, over 75 million people were killed in the Second World War.

Spiritual Warfare against Hitler

We, the church of Jesus Christ, are to exercise the authority that God has given us in the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20) and to pray and intercede, exercising on earth the positional authority we have been given by Christ. This actually happened against Hitler and totally turned the course of the Second World War. In 1941, Britain stood all alone against Hitler. He had control of most of Europe by that time. Hitler only had to beat Britain. God, in answer to prayer, brought a great fog over Dunkirk, France, so that the German air force could not bomb the 335,000 strong British army assembling there to be evacuated by boat to Britain. Many fishing boats, my grandfather's included, could sail across the English Channel due to it being so uncommonly calm, and rescue the British Army from being totally destroyed on the Coast of France. It has often been wondered why the Germans did not pursue the British to the coast, but Hitler overruled the wishes of his Generals due to being influenced by a horoscope. While he prepared an invasion fleet, Hitler started bombing Britain's airfields and major cities where her industry was based. Britain was down to very few Spitfires and Hurricanes, her only fighter planes that were capable of knocking down Hitler's bombers. The situation was so grave that King George VI, the King of Britain, went on national radio calling for a day of prayer for the whole

nation. Such was the ominous feeling that Britain was going to be invaded and overrun.

In the book, Rees Howells Intercessor, the author, Norman Grubb,³ writes about the life of Rees Howells, a man gifted greatly in the area of prayer, describing how he had gathered together 120 of the best intercessors who were called to fight in prayer as if they, themselves, were in the trenches. In 1940, at Britain's lowest point, America had still not entered the war. The most amazing thing happened as these 120 intercessors prayed and wept and called on God to save the British Isles, Adolph Hitler, Germany's leader at the time, against all the advice of his generals, suddenly changed his mind about attacking Britain with his invasion force. He directed all his forces against Russia in the East, breaking his pact with Josef Stalin of Russia. Britain was saved, and America entered the war. God uses prayer. Was this just coincidence? No, as the prayer warriors interceded, God frustrated the plans of the evil one, and turned the war completely around due to the humble prayers of a nation and because of 120 trained prayer people.

Do you think God takes sides in wars between one nation and another? What motivates Him to listen to one nation's prayers against another? Is there such a thing as a moral high ground?

It is interesting that Hitler was intent upon wiping out the nation of Israel. We have seen this in the past. This is not unlike the story in the book of Esther where one man, Haman sought to destroy the entire Hebrew race. The enemy's intent is to steal, kill and destroy. God calls us to wage an intercessory prayer war against the demonic influences in using people for destructive ends:

³ For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. ⁴ The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. ⁵ 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 (2 Corinthians 10:3-5).

We, the church, have been given spiritual weap-

² <http://logosresourcepages.org/Occult/hitler.htm>

³ Rees Howells Intercessor, Norman Grubb, CLC Publications, Pages 285-292.

ons with divine power to demolish strongholds of the enemy. Where are these strongholds? The enemy gains a stronghold through our minds. There are strongholds in the minds of people, such as we see in the case of Hitler, whose thoughts were influenced by demonic forces. Does that mean we should never fight with guns and bullets against evil men that rise up to destroy us? Should we just pray? No, if we had never resisted Hitler, demonic evil forces would have gained control over nations and taken away our religious freedoms, and sought to end the worship of God in every place where that evil regime took hold in this world. The church is called to intercessory prayer to overcome the spiritual forces that seek to oppose the forward movement of the church to preach the Gospel to every creature. In any battle with an enemy, one should always seek to know their enemy. Knowing the enemy's plans and how he works will help us to avoid his schemes.

Satan and the Inhabitants of the Unseen Realm

A number of times in the Bible there is what is known as the law of double reference, a passage of scripture which is speaking about an earthly king, but also speaking about the spirit that is motivating and empowering him. It is similar to when Jesus spoke to Peter saying, "Get behind me, Satan." The Lord was not speaking to Peter, but to the spirit that was motivating the thought that Peter had spoken when he sought to turn Jesus from His path which led to the cross. (Matthew 16:23). For instance, in Ezekiel 28 we have a prophetic word spoken to the king of Tyre which seems clearly to be speaking about another entity as well, an entity other than a worldly king:

¹² "Son of man, take up a lament concerning the king of Tyre and say to him: 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says: "'You were the model of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty. ¹³ You were in Eden, the garden of God; every precious stone adorned you: ruby, topaz and emerald, chrysolite, onyx and jasper, sapphire, turquoise and beryl. Your settings and mountings were made of gold; on the day you were created they were prepared. ¹⁴ You were anointed as a guardian cherub, for so I ordained you. You were on the holy mount of God; you walked among the fiery stones. ¹⁵ You were blameless in your ways from the day you were created till wickedness was found in you. ¹⁶ 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, from among the fiery stones. ¹⁷

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; I made a spectacle of you before kings (Ezekiel 28:12-17).

Most Bible teachers believe this passage of scripture is speaking about Satan. If that is correct, what truths stand out about Satan from this passage?

- 1) *He is a created being (V.15)*
- 2) *He was a model of perfection, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty (V.12)*
- 3) *He is wicked (V.15-16)*
- 4) *He was thrown to Earth (I take that to mean the second heaven, the unseen realm that intersects with Earth).*
- 5) *His heart is full of pride and corrupted by his wisdom.*

How would you define pride and why is it so dangerous?

Dictionary.com says about pride: "a high or inordinate opinion of one's own dignity, importance, merit, or superiority, whether as cherished in the mind or as displayed in bearing, conduct, etc." Satan was so full of pride in his own superiority that he rebelled against God wanting to be as God. This is brought out in another passage of scripture where we again see this law of double reference used. This time the prophet is speaking to the king of Babylon. As one reads the passage it seems obvious that the prophet is speaking about Satan himself and talking about his demise when he is captured:

⁹ The grave below is all astir to meet you at your coming; it rouses the spirits of the departed to greet you— all those who were leaders in the world; it makes them rise from their thrones— all those who were kings over the nations. ¹⁰ They will all respond, they will say to you, "You also have become weak, as we are; you have become like us." ¹¹ All your pomp has been brought down to the grave, along with the noise of your harps; maggots are spread out beneath you and worms cover you. ¹² 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! ¹³ 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. ¹⁴ I will ascend above the tops of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High." ¹⁵ But you are brought down

to the grave, to the depths of the pit.¹⁶ Those who see you stare at you, they ponder your fate: “Is this the man who shook the earth and made kingdoms tremble,¹⁷ the man who made the world a desert, who overthrew its cities and would not let his captives go home?” (Isaiah 14:9-17).

How many “I will’s” do you see in the above passage? What does it indicate to us about Satan’s character?

Satan’s purpose is to be as God. He wants to raise his throne above all else’s, including God’s. Isn’t it interesting that for each of the five I will’s that we read in this passage, in 14:15-20, you will see that God has five responses: Satan will be 1) thrown into the Pit, 2) gazed upon, 3) talked about, 4) cast out of his grave, and 5) be alone.

We are told in scripture that God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble (1 Peter 5:5). How does a person gain humility?

Satan’s Hierarchy of Evil

Inhabiting this unseen spiritual realm that intersects with Earth are at least four different categories of spiritual beings that are at war against God’s creation and kingdom:

¹⁰ Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power.
¹¹ Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil’s schemes.¹² 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 6:10-12).

Paul the Apostle is careful that the church is aware of who the fight is against. The word translated struggle (V.12) is the Greek word *palē* which literally means to wrestle. He is saying that people are never our enemy. It is not flesh and blood that we fight our battle against, it is spiritual forces in the heavenly realms.

Who are you currently struggling against? Is it a person at work, a spouse, a child, a relative or friend? What will you do differently as a result of meditating on this verse?

The picture one gets with Paul’s use of the word wrestling or struggling is of two men using all their en-

ergies to overcome one another. But this is not a fight against people, flesh and blood, but against spiritual forces that occupy the heavenly realms and from their vantage point influence people such as Adolph Hitler. John the Apostle wrote that “the whole world is under the control of the evil one” (1 John 5:19).

What do you think John means when he says that the whole world is under the control of the evil one?

I take it to mean that Satan has so structured his evil forces so that countries, regions, towns, villages and yes, even people, have some level of enemy personality at work to control what goes on under each enemy sphere of influence. In referencing the whole world being under the control of Satan, John the Apostle is talking about the world system that is against God. Those of us that are walking with Christ are out from his authority and control (Colossians 1:13). The only way he can influence us is in the area of our minds. We will look at this at a later session. Let’s take a closer look at the Greek words used by Paul to describe these four categories of evil to the church in Ephesians 6:12:

1) **The Rulers.** The Greek word is *Archē*. This word means principalities or chief rulers. It speaks of beings of the highest ranking in Satan’s kingdom. The word also implies beginning. It speaks of a position so high that these spiritual rulers confer with Satan himself and rule over nations to bring about the goals of these enemies of God. We can compare them to Hitler’s top men that formed the Nazi Party during the Second World War, men that sat down with Hitler and brought about his strategies to dominate most of Europe, seeking to destroy the Jewish people in the process. In the book of Daniel there is an example of an evil prince that ruled over the whole territory of Persia. I believe that every nation has an evil prince such as the one mentioned ruling over each nation. The context of the passage is of an angel sent to Daniel to help him understand a revelation that he has been given for the nation of Israel. An evil spiritual Ruler has delayed the angel in getting the message to Daniel.

¹² Then he continued, “Do not be afraid, Daniel. Since the first day that you set your mind to gain understanding and to humble yourself before your God, your words were heard, and I have come in response to them.¹³ But the prince of the Persian kingdom resisted me twenty-one days. Then Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, because I was detained there with the king of

Persia (Daniel 10:12-13).

We are told that the evil prince's dominion is over the geographical area of Persia, now present day Iran. That spirit is still there in Iran, seeking to do what it can to destroy the American and Jewish people with nuclear weapons which it is currently developing with missile technology from North Korea. Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, the president of Iran, seems to be a modern day Hitler, held under the sway of the Persian Prince seeking to bring about Satan's purposes to try to destroy the USA and Israel, the main nations that stand against world domination by Islam. This high ranking evil spirit is motivating Ahmadinejad to lead the world into another holocaust. It was only after the angel Michael intervened that the angel got through to Daniel with the message that he was waiting for. Since the cross and the giving of the Spirit to the church, we now have been given authority to resist and oppose evil spiritual forces.

2) The Authorities. The Greek word is Exousia. This word means authority. It is delegated authority from higher up the chain of command. It speaks of a spirit who is given permission, capability, right and authority to carry out an action. Using the analogy of Hitler's men, this would be like his generals on the field of action, men who were given commands from above and exercised that authority on the battlefield.

3) The Powers of this Dark World. There are three principal Greek words here that describe these spirit beings. The first word is composed of two Greek words put together. The word is Kosmokratōr. The first word of the two is kosmos, translated with the English word "world." The other word is krateō, translated into our English word "to hold." The picture is of evil spirits that hold the physical world under the grip of darkness by an assault on the mind. My personal belief is that these spirits hold sway over belief systems that tie men's minds to religious works. These spirits don't so much hold sway over territory; their influence is mostly felt in thought systems that bind people's minds from finding out the truth of God and thereby be set free of demonic influence.

How do you think these spirits manifest themselves on planet Earth? What examples can you think of?

These spirits foster belief systems such as Hin-

duism, Buddhism, Islam, Communism, Secular Humanism, to name just a few. The spiritual evil powers also use men and women that are in the educational fields, men such as Charles Darwin with the Theory of Evolution. This includes religious spirits that bind people to try to earn salvation in the Christian religion instead of receiving the free gift of life from Christ. Religious spirits are very deceptive. Paul writes about the influence of these particular spirits, the dark world powers, when he wrote his second letter to the church at Corinth: 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). Satan himself is the one accused of blinding people's minds but I tend to believe that he is the one directing the powers of this dark world that influence people's minds.

4) The Spiritual Forces of Evil in the Heavenly Realms. These can be compared to your basic foot soldiers. These spiritual forces are demons of varying lower ranks that oppose and obstruct men and women from searching and finding the truth in this world. These demons have targeted not only non-Christians but also hinder spiritual growth in God's people when they find the truth and commit their lives to Christ. Every man or woman of God, I believe, has a demonic spirit that is continually looking for ways to weaken and destroy the testimony of the believer. Their principal weapon is to sow destructive thoughts in the seed bed of your mind, thoughts that will germinate and grow and become attitudes and habits that will enslave people and render them fruitless. The higher the level of influence you have in the Kingdom of God the higher the rank and cleverness of the evil spirit assigned to you. These attacks may be more than thoughts; if we buy into the thoughts and mull over them, they may become feelings such as depression, discouragement, frustration, bitterness and resentment among many other things. You may find that the enemy's strategies of attack against you may change as you grow older and more mature in Christ. I found that in my early days as a Christian, the enemy would plant a thought such as, "you don't really believe in God, do you?" As I got older that thought would no longer come to me. The enemy knew he was wasting his time with that thought because I had come to a solid, logical, Bible centered belief that there must be a God ruling and reigning over the Earth. I had thoroughly searched and weighed the evidence and come to solid conclusions to base my faith on.

How have you felt that the enemy's attacks on you have changed over the past weeks, months or years?

You may not be aware of being in a battle, but let me assure you, if you are a disciple of Christ endeavoring to do God's will on planet Earth, you are in a battle whether you like it or not (2 Timothy 3:12). There are some expositors that believe that Revelation 12:4 indicates that Satan has won over to his side a third of the stars of heaven. They believe the stars are angelic beings that are now called demons. I don't know if that is the proper interpretation of that passage but I do believe that there are a multitude of demons that inhabit the unseen region. They are structured in such a way to do the maximum damage to the Kingdom of God that they can. We need not fear these demons and evil spirits sent against us because Christ has triumphed over them by the cross.

¹⁵ And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross (Colossians 2:15).

The word of God is very plain about the power that we have to defeat them. We are told that "the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world" (1 John 4:4). Who is in us? Christ Jesus has taken up residence in our hearts when we receive the gift of eternal life. The Spirit of God is in us and wants to use us for God's glory. At a later session we will look at the authority and power Christ has given us to frustrate the plans of the evil one. "I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy; nothing will harm you" (Luke 10:19). Peter assures us in his first letter that Christ has conquered all the power of the enemy and sat down alongside the Father in the throne room and enemy powers have been put under His feet.

²² Who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, **angels and authorities and powers** having been made subject to Him (1 Peter 3:22 emphasis mine).

At the beginning we talked about the spirit or spirits that managed to find an entrance into the life of Adolph Hitler. We have learned that this world is under the sway of demonic forces under the control of Satan and that they influence what happens in the world by controlling flesh and blood individuals. What is the

church to do against such forces? In some way that I cannot fully explain, you and I that are Christians are seated in the heavenly realms with Christ, even though at the same time we are walking on this Earth. Christ is seen as seated on the throne far above every authority, power and dominion and because of our relationship to Christ, He has also seated us with Him, exercising His authority in the world through prayer. Paul explains this place of authority in these words:

¹⁸ I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, ¹⁹ and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is like the working of his mighty strength, ²⁰ which he exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead and **seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms**, ²¹ far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every title that can be given, not only in the present age but also in the one to come. ²² And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, ²³ which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way (Ephesians 1:18-23).

⁶ And **God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms** in Christ Jesus, ⁷ in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus (Ephesians 2:6-7).

How do we become effective in our fight against the evil one? How do we become a formidable force in the kingdom of God? We have established that every one of us is in the midst of a spiritual battle whether we want to be aware of this or not. Also, we know that we are given the authority in Christ and the powerful weapon of prayer in the Name of Jesus Christ. There are some basic 101 principles we need to be aware of to be effective.

1) **Know who you are in Christ.** Are you convinced of the authority of Christ? Don't try and wage warfare in your own strength. Rely on His strength and take direction from the Holy Spirit.

2) **Agree with the Word of God.** In this world, you will find that it is becoming more and more unpopular to agree with the Word of God. The Word of God is consistent and it does not change. The truth in God's Word should shape our thinking and our decisions. Learn the truth in God's Word, and in applying that truth, you will find yourself on the right side of spiritual conflict, re-

ardless of what others think of you. God's Word, scripture tells us, is powerful and sharper than a two edged sword (Hebrews 4:12). We will talk more about this later.

3) **Agree with the Holy Spirit quickly.** Every time you decide to use self control instead of giving into your temper, every time you choose to forgive instead of harboring bitterness, and every time you decide to consider other's needs before your own and make unselfish decisions, you are training yourself for battle and becoming a formidable warrior. You cannot fight the enemy while at the same time giving him ground in your own life. If however, you are aware of the battle in your mind and in your own life and are submitting to the Lordship of Christ, you will grow in your ability to exercise Christ's authority and be effective in seeing the Kingdom of God made manifest in our world, overcoming the enemy.

4) **See the possibilities.** What areas of your life do you see the enemy infiltrating? Do you need to be more active in this spiritual battle for members of your family or friends? The enemy would seek to blind us to possibilities or make us think that we have to accept the way things are, but if we look at things from God's perspective, and in agreement with His Word, we can start to do battle in these situations! Ask God to help you see the possibilities and exercise your faith in Him and in His Word to see change in your own life, your family, and beyond.

Prayer: Thank you, Father, for the work of Christ on the cross in delivering me from Satan's dominion. Grant to me a growing sense of the power and authority that I have been given to overcome and resist the enemy's attacks on the lives of my family, my friends and myself. Amen.

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