

Some aspects of

Spiritual Warfare



JOHN HOLLAND

SOME ASPECTS OF SPIRITUAL WARFARE

Author John Holland

This booklet does not attempt to present a complete study on spiritual warfare and deliverance, but instead presents different aspects of spiritual warfare not generally found in other books.

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P.O. Box 975 G.P.O. Warrnambool. 3280

Victoria AUSTRALIA.

Email: contact@covenanttruth.com.au

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Chapter 1

THE REALITY AND ACTIVITY OF DEMON SPIRITS

THE REALITY OF DEMON SPIRITS

From studying the gospels, we cannot help but conclude that a significant part of the ministry of Jesus on earth dealt with casting out demon spirits from those who were oppressed.

Examples

“And He was preaching in their synagogues throughout all Galilee, and casting out demons.” Mark 1:39.

He Authorized His Disciples to Cast out Demons

“Then He called His twelve disciples together and gave them power and authority over all demons, and to cure diseases.” Luke 9:1.

He authorized all Those Who Believed In Him

“And these signs will follow those who believe: In My name they will cast out demons...” Mark 16:17.

CAN A CHRISTIAN HAVE A DEMON?

Speaking to Christians, James says, **““Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show by good conduct that his works are done in the meekness of wisdom. But if you have bitter envy and self-seeking in your hearts, do not boast and lie against the truth. This wisdom does not descend from above, but is earthly, sensual, and demonic. For where envy and self-seeking exist, confusion and every evil thing are there.”** James 3:13-16.

Paul writes to the Corinthian church, **“For if he who comes preaches another Jesus whom we have not preached, or if you receive a different spirit which you have not received, or a different gospel which you have not accepted--you may well put up with it!”** 2 Cor 11:4.

And to Timothy, **“Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons...”** 1 Tim 4:1.

We read this startling account from the Book of Acts. **“Now the multitude of those who believed were of one heart and one soul; neither did anyone say that any of the things he possessed was his own, but they had all things in common. But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession. And he kept back part of the proceeds, his wife also being aware of it, and brought a certain part and laid it at the apostles' feet. But Peter said, “Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and keep back part of the price of the land for yourself?”** Acts 4:32, 5:1-3.

Deliverance was a Ministry to Christians

In the description of the gifts of the Spirit we are told that they were for the profit of all Christians. **“But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all.”** 1 Cor 12:7. Among the nine gifts listed is “discerning of spirits.” **“...to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another discerning of spirits...”** 1 Cor 12:10. This gift is an essential tool in the deliverance ministry.

THE WORLD IS UNDER THE POWER OF SATAN

First of all we must understand the extent of Satan’s control of the world. Jesus referred to Satan as **“the ruler of this world.”** [John 14:30]. The apostle John verified this when he wrote, **“We know that we are of God, and the whole world lies under the sway of the wicked one.”** [I Jn 5:19 NKJ].

However, Jesus did not come to reform the world, or to take it out of Satan’s control. The judgment of the world has already been announced. Jesus came to deliver us out of the worldly system that is under the power of Satan, and to establish us in His kingdom of righteousness. **“For (God) delivered us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son.”** [Col 1:13 NAS].

This then is the basis of spiritual warfare--Jesus is endeavouring to deliver us out of the kingdom and power of Satan, and establish us in His kingdom, and Satan is attempting to bind the world in a state of wickedness.

HOW DOES SATAN CONTROL THE WORLD

Part of Satan’s deception is to deny the presence of demon spirits in our midst. Consequently, people are persuaded to believe that demons are a figment of our imagination--that Christians cannot have a demon--that evil spirits cannot dwell in the presence of the Holy Spirit. Supposedly, demons were banished with the advent of the church. Paul expressly denied this when he said, **“For we (the church) do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places (the atmosphere).”** [Eph 6:12].

The Book of Revelation figuratively describes the opening of the bottomless pit in the last days, and the emergence of hordes of demon spirits. **“And he opened the bottomless pit, and smoke (of deception and darkness) arose out of the pit like the smoke of a great furnace. So the sun and the air (the light of truth) were darkened (obscured) because of the smoke of the pit. Then out of the smoke locusts (demon spirits) came upon the earth. And to them was given power, as the scorpions of the earth have power.”** [Rev 9:2-3]. Satan’s power to exert some control over human behaviour is by the action of demon spirits.

This description is given credence by Paul’s warning of the state of so called Christians in the last days. **“But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having a form of godliness (professing to be Christians) **but denying its power.**”** 2 Tim 3:1-5.

The truth is that the whole world is flooded with the presence of **“spiritual hosts of wickedness,”** and that we as Christians are being continually confronted with their influence.

Crowd Behaviour Can be Manipulated by Demon Spirits

Some Scriptural Examples

“For a certain man named Demetrius, a silversmith, who made silver shrines of Diana, brought no small profit to the craftsmen. He called them together with the workers of similar occupation, and said: "Men, you know that we have our prosperity by this trade. Moreover you see and hear that not only at Ephesus, but also throughout almost all Asia, this Paul has persuaded and turned away many people, saying that they are not gods, which are made with hands... And when they heard this, they were full of wrath and cried out, saying, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians! So the whole city was filled with confusion, and rushed into the theatre with one accord, having seized Gaius and Aristarchus, Macedonians, Paul's travel companions.” [Acts 19:24-29]. Spirits supporting the pagan goddess Diana dispossessed the crowds of their sound reasoning and self-control. Consequently people were rushing to the theatre filled with confusion and wrath.

When Jesus stood before Pilate, the crowds in Jerusalem were overtaken with hostility as they gave their ears to the chief priests, who were under the power of Satan's spirits. **“Therefore, when the chief priests and officers saw Him, they cried out, saying, "Crucify Him, crucify Him!" Pilate said to them, "You take Him and crucify Him, for I find no fault in Him...Now it was the Preparation Day of the Passover, and about the sixth hour. And he said to the Jews, "Behold your King!" But they cried out, "Away with Him, away with Him! Crucify Him!" Pilate said to them, "Shall I crucify your King?" The chief priests answered, "We have no king but Caesar!"** [John 19:6, 14-15]. The Jews were so irrational at the end that they cried out, **"We have no king but Caesar!"**--a stand that was completely against their natural inclination. In much the same way modern crowds have been manipulated at soccer brawls, protest rallies, bargain sales, riots, and so on.

Occultist Bondage to People

The nature of occultism is to control or manipulate another person, and bring them into bondage. History is full of examples of dominant personalities indoctrinating whole nations with their ideologies, even inciting them to war with other countries.

When people allow themselves to be occultly bonded to cult leaders, they open themselves to be oppressed by the spiritual powers associated with them. The fanatical adoration of super stars by multitudes of young people is so captivating that it may have a significant influence on their behaviour or manner of dress.

Residential Spirits

These spirits reside in a particular area, settling on those who enter. When we depart from the area, they often leave us a legacy of listlessness, heaviness, or perhaps even a headache. While most people do not realize it, they come in contact with their presence when they enter shops selling Eastern wares such as buddas, and are confronted by the heaviness of occultist spirits. Residential spirits often congregate in large shopping malls and places of worldly trade and commerce, and leave us drained when we depart.

Spirits Associated With Other People

These spirits are not confined to a particular area, and so are more likely to have a prolonged affect on us. We may encounter spirits of heaviness, depression, gossip, resentment, anger, etc from those with whom we have made contact. By identifying with the attitudes of a person we attract

similar spirits, which then oppress us. Eg. A person enters our house and unloads the burdens of an unhappy marriage relationship. If we enter into the circumstances, associating ourselves with the injured party, then we open ourselves to attracting similar spirits of anger, resentment, rebellion, and so on. And they will stay with us until we personally repent and reject such attitudes in Jesus' name.

Spirits Associated With Pursuits

Demon spirits may be associated with the way we entertain ourselves. For example, we may be confronted with spirits of lust or violence associated with certain films. Again, the degree to which these spirits influence us depends upon how much we identify with what the film portrays. And again, the spirits will remain with us until we personally repent and renounce our involvement with them.

Any pursuit that holds us in bondage--such as gambling, alcohol, sport etc--has spirits attached to it.

HOW ARE SPIRITS AND THEIR INFLUENCE TRANSFERRED?

Transference of evil spirits is probably a phenomenon that we experience every day. Of course the first condition is that we must come into contact with them. A spiritually aware person should know where there is a concentration of residential spirits, and to avoid such areas. If this is unavoidable, as in a shopping mall, we should protect ourselves by the spiritual covering of the blood of Jesus.

There are numerous other occasions where we are unavoidably confronted with oppression from other people. We may have spiritual oppression dumped on us in the form of gossip, depression, heaviness, negativity, rebellion, and so on. To what degree we are affected depends on our reaction to the circumstances. We must disassociate ourselves from the oppressions, even if they are being exhibited by someone as close as a husband, wife, son, or daughter. To associate with their reactions is to partake of the oppressions.

Soul Ties and Bondages

Soul ties occur when closely knit friends adopt the likes and dislikes of each other. When adopting the undesirable traits of each other, spirits can readily transfer between them. A bonded person attracts identical spirits associated with the other person. The Scriptures warn us, **“Make no friendship with an angry man, and with a furious man do not go, lest you learn his ways and set a snare for your soul.”** Prov 22:24-25. Unhealthy ‘soul ties’ should be renounced and broken in the name of Jesus.

Generational Curses

Generational curses occur where one behavioural trait is passed on from generation to generation. God warned of this when He said that the sins of parents might be visited **“upon the children and the children's children to the third and the fourth generation.”** Exod 34:7. This is because where there is a natural bonding or association between family members, there is an easier transference of spirits. This is particularly so in the case of maternal domineering spirits--as in a Jezebel spirit or spirit of witchcraft.

Generational bondage is often discerned by sin patterns that repeat from generation to generation—e.g. witchcraft, drunkenness, violence etc. Personally confessing the sins of our ancestors and renouncing any association with them may break generational curses.

Occultist Practices

In all cases spirit transference occurs as a result of involvement in occultist practice, such as tarot cards, fortune telling, ouija boards, astrology, divination, martial arts, or possessing occultist images, charms, buddas etc. It should be apparent that being involved in any form of occult experience forms a direct association or link with demon spirits.

To be set free there must be genuine repentance and renouncement of the occult, and the severing of all links to satanic spirits in the name of Jesus. Note the reaction of the Ephesian believers when they were informed of their involvement with the occult. **“Also, many of those who had practiced magic brought their books together and burned them in the sight of all. And they counted up the value of them, and it totalled fifty thousand pieces of silver.”** Acts 19:19.

THE LORD’S DELIVERANCE

Coming under the influence of demonic spirits and being delivered, are deemed as remote experiences, equated more with medieval times. It is commonly assumed that a person coming under the influence of evil spirits must be desperately wicked, and that the ministry of deliverance is a painfully harrowing experience.

The truth of the matter is that we all are constantly being subjected to the influence of demon spirits. It is a part of our daily walk. Similarly we are continually being spontaneously set free as we turn to the Lord in repentance, and as we honour the Lord in prayer, praise, and worship. It is only on few occasions that a formal deliverance ministry is necessary, incorporating the counsel of other members of the body, and the use of the gifts of the Spirit

OPPOSITION TO CHRIST'S WORK

THE SOURCE AND TARGET OF SPIRITUAL WARFARE

Spiritual warfare may result from the fleshly reactions directed from another person, or from opposition to the ministry of Christ. That is why, in regard to spiritual warfare, some readings appear to be contradictory. For example, we have Jesus' instructions to love and bless those who persecute you.

"You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbour and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust." Matt 5:43-45.

And likewise Paul, **"Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord. Therefore "If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him a drink; for in so doing you will heap coals of fire on his head." Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good."** Rom 12:19-21.

"Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep." Rom 12:14-15.

But on the other hand, in the Book of Revelation Jesus commands the 'two witnesses' to call down the fire of judgment on the heads of their enemies.

"And if anyone wants to harm them (the two witnesses), fire proceeds from their mouth and devours their enemies. And if anyone wants to harm them, he *MUST* be killed in this manner. Rev 11:5.

In this reading, Paul seems to contradict his instruction to bless those who persecute you. **"This charge I commit to you, son Timothy, according to the prophecies previously made concerning you, that by them you may wage the good warfare, having faith and a good conscience, which some having rejected, concerning the faith have suffered shipwreck, of whom are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I delivered to Satan that they may learn not to blaspheme."** 1 Tim 1:18-20.

"Alexander the coppersmith did me much harm. May the Lord repay him according to his works. You also must be ware of him, for he has greatly resisted our words." 2 Tim 4:14-15.

TWO RESPONSES TO PERSECUTION

Why are there two different recommended responses to persecution? Basically, the difference relates to the source and target of the persecution.

Personal Animosity

On one hand the persecution or hatred or wrongdoing may come out of a person's 'flesh,' and be directed at us personally. It may take the form of intense dislike, gossip, whisperings, defamatory

remarks, jealousy, rejection, mistreatment, and so on. When confronted with this type of behaviour, Jesus' first command applies - **“love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you.”**

We have an example of this in Jesus' response when rejected by the Samaritans. **“And as they went, they entered a village of the Samaritans, to prepare for Him. But they did not receive Him, because His face was set for the journey to Jerusalem. And when His disciples James and John saw this, they said, “Lord, do You want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them, just as Elijah did?” But He turned and rebuked them, and said, “You do not know what manner of spirit you are of. For the Son of Man did not come to destroy men's lives but to save them.” And they went to another village.”** Lk 9:52-56.

In this incident, Jesus sent some of His disciples ahead to find lodgings, but He was rejected because it was obvious that He was bound for Jerusalem. The Samaritans believed that Samaria, not Jerusalem, was the centre of worship. Their rejection was in the nature of a personal affront rather than an effort to stop His ministry, and so Jesus rebuked His disciples for wanting to harm them in any way.

Opposition to the Work of Christ

On the other hand, persecution or opposition may be initiated by demon spirits in a person, having the ultimate aim of minimising a ministry, and destroying the work of Christ. Satan uses those over whom he has some control to act in a way that threatens the effectiveness of our ministries. In these cases we are commanded to enter into offensive warfare--even to calling down the fire of judgment so that the opposition will be brought to nothing.

Examples:

On another occasion, Jesus had set His face towards Jerusalem to fulfil His destiny. **“Then Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, saying, “Far be it from You, Lord; this shall not happen to You!””** But because Peter was endeavouring to interfere with His work, Jesus rebuked him sharply. **“He turned and said to Peter, “Get behind Me, Satan! You are an offence to Me, for you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men.”** [Matt 16:21-23].

In the case of Alexander the coppersmith, **“he... greatly resisted (Paul's) words.”** In delivering him over to the power of Satan (under the guidance of the Holy Spirit), Paul was in effect removing his hedge of protection, making him vulnerable to the demon powers he had cooperated with. The reason why Paul took such an action was **“so that the message might be preached fully through (him), and that all the Gentiles might hear.”**

The same applies to Jesus' instruction to the “two witnesses” in the Book of Revelation. Those who have the commission of the two witnesses must wield the word of God in prophetic teaching to prepare the way for the Lord's second coming, and **“the restoration of all things.”** [Acts 3:29] Because the work is vitally important to the Lord's purposes, the witnesses are instructed that **“fire proceeds from their mouth and devours their enemies. And if anyone wants to harm them, he MUST be killed in this manner.”** As with much of the Book of Revelation, this language is figurative. They must call down the fire of judgment on **“anyone (who) wants to harm them** (i.e. the ministry of the two witnesses),” until they are ‘killed,’ or their opposition is brought to nothing.

We have a further striking example in Paul dealing with Elymas the sorcerer. **“This man (Sergius Paulus) called for Barnabas and Saul and sought to hear the word of God. But Elymas the sorcerer (for so his name is translated) withstood them, seeking to turn the proconsul away”**

from the faith. Then Saul, who also is called Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit (therefore acting under the guidance and power of the Spirit), **looked intently at him and said, "O full of all deceit and all fraud, you son of the devil, you enemy of all righteousness, will you not cease perverting the straight ways of the Lord? And now, indeed, the hand of the Lord is upon you, and you shall be blind, not seeing the sun for a time." And immediately a dark mist fell on him, and he went around seeking someone to lead him by the hand." [Acts 13:7-11].**

Again, it was because the work of the Lord was threatened that Paul called down the fire of judgment on Elymas the sorcerer. This action took place when Paul was "**filled with the Holy Spirit**" i.e. his current ministry was anointed and directed by the Spirit.

THE NATURE OF SPIRITUAL WARFARE

AVENUES OF ATTACK

Spiritual warfare may be directed through a number of different avenues. The following are some examples.

Attacks on Our Mental and Psychological Well Being

The mind is subjected to the most extensive spiritual conflict. Through his spirits, Satan has the capacity to run thoughts across our minds. We have the choice to entertain and pursue them, or to dismiss them as an intrusion of Satan. It is important that we learn to discern the difference between our thoughts, and those introduced by Satan.

As a guide, when thoughts intrude on the general trend of our thinking, (eg. Ridicule--discouragement--vain imaginings--depression--negativeness--rebellion at circumstances--lust--resentment, and such like), thoughts that take away our peace and serenity in the Lord, we can be assured that they originated from Satan. It is vital that we understand that **THEY ARE NOT OUR THOUGHTS** until we entertain and extend them. By accepting them as our thoughts and entertaining them further we are opening the door to spiritual oppression.

Attacks on Our Physical Well Being

Jesus said that Satan **“was a murderer from the beginning.”** John 8:44. He compared His ministry with Satan’s purposes for mankind.

“The thief (Satan) does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly. John 10:10.

“...God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, who went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him.” Acts 10:38.

Satan’s aim is to wear down, or totally incapacitate the saints, in order to impede their work or spiritual progress. Our defence is by testifying to the many healing passages in the bible, and then standing on **“the word of our testimony.”** Rev 12:11.

We may personalise our testimonies to make them more effective. Eg: **“(Jesus) Himself bore (my) sins** (with all their evil consequences of sickness, pain and infirmity) **in His own body on the tree, that (I), having died to sins** (and Satan’s legal right to afflict my body with sickness), **might live for righteousness** (partaking of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus)--**by whose stripes (I was) healed.”** [1 Pet 2:24].

Deceit and Deception

Those most vulnerable to fall prey to deceiving spirits are those who act independently from the body, and engage in lawless works of the flesh. We are to maintain a position of rest in the Lord, and find safety in the nurture of the body--particularly in the oversight of the elders.

Attacks on Our Material Resources

Satan spoke of God's protection of Job's possessions in this manner. **"Have You. (God) not made a hedge around him (the protection of His angels), around his household, and around all that he has on every side? You have blessed the work of his hands, and his possessions have increased in the land."** Job 1:10. We must be diligent in pleading the blood of Jesus over our work and our possessions, consecrating them to God's service.

Through Fear and Doubt

Accusing spirits of Satan try to strike fear in the hearts of the saints by their lying deceptions. Our sure defence is to retreat into Jesus Christ and His glorious finished work on the cross. The word says to **"set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. For you (your old self) died, and your (new) life is hidden with Christ in God."** Col 3:2-3. Our safe haven is in the abiding presence of Jesus Christ in God. We are to put our trust in the faithfulness of our Father.

"He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.

I will say of the LORD, "He is my refuge and my fortress; my God, in Him I will trust."
Ps 91:1-2.

Through Temptation

Satan, through his evil spirits, continually tempts us to gratify the desires and lusts of the flesh, and through idolatry to covet the things of the world. Again Jesus is our safe refuge. We are to **"put off the old man with his deeds (declaring it crucified in Christ)"** Col 3:9-10, and **"put on (or clothe ourselves in the presence of) the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfil its lusts."** Rom 13:14. We must rely on the presence of the Lord in us to manifest His victory over sin.

Hatred

Jesus warned His followers, **"...you will be hated by all for My name's sake."** Matt 10:22. This type of hatred is borne out of a rejection of the truth. But all hatred, including that borne out of fleshly animosity, is of the devil, and it projects a spirit of death. The apostle John said, **"Whoever hates his brother is a murderer."** I Jn 3:15. We must abide under the covering of the blood of Jesus, and return every weapon back on those who initiate it.

Through Disharmony and Disunity

Satan attempts to cause disharmony and disunity in the body of Christ through unnecessary personal contentions and doctrinal disputes. E.g. creation, sectarian divisions, and denominationalism, causing disunity in the body. The apostles were consistent in their warnings against harm through such divisions.

"Now I urge you, brethren, note those who cause divisions and offences, contrary to the doctrine which you learned, and avoid them." Rom 16:17.

"Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. For it has been declared to me concerning you, my brethren, by those of Chloe's household, that there are contentions among you." 1 Cor 1:10-11

“But if you have bitter envy and self-seeking in your hearts, do not boast and lie against the truth. This wisdom does not descend from above, but is earthly, sensual, demonic. For where envy and self-seeking exist, confusion and every evil thing are there.” James 3:14-16.

“For I fear lest, when I come, I shall not find you such as I wish, and that I shall be found by you such as you do not wish; lest there be contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, backbitings, whisperings, conceits, tumults...” 2 Cor 12:20

“For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: "You shall love your neighbour as yourself." But if you bite and devour one another, beware lest you be consumed by one another!” Gal 5:14-15

AN EXAMPLE OF SATAN'S ATTACKS

NEHEMIAH REBUILDING THE CITY WALLS

Nehemiah 4:1-23

Nehemiah was commissioned by God to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem. In obedience he enlisted the help of the Jews in Jerusalem and surrounding areas, but as soon as the work commenced it was opposed. Satan's first attack came through Sanballat and Tobiah. Their mocking derision was aimed at undermining the mental and psychological well being of the builders. *Verse 1*: **"But it so happened, when Sanballat heard that we were rebuilding the wall, that he was furious and very indignant, and mocked the Jews. And he spoke before his brethren and the army of Samaria, and said, "What are these feeble Jews doing? Will they fortify themselves? Will they offer sacrifices? Will they complete it in a day? Will they revive the stones from the heaps of rubbish--stones that are burned?" Now Tobiah the Ammonite was beside him, and he said, "Whatever they build, if even a fox goes up on it, he will break down their stone wall."**

Nehemiah's response was a valid tactic in spiritual warfare when confronted with unwarranted attacks. He turned their weapons back on their own heads. *Verse 4*: **"Hear, O our God, for we are despised; turn their reproach on their own heads, and give them as plunder to a land of captivity! Do not cover their iniquity, and do not let their sin be blotted out from before You; for they have provoked You to anger before the builders."** If we are being obedient to God's commission, and have covered and consecrated both ourselves and the work in the blood of Jesus, Satan and his agents have no legal right to afflict us, and so we are entitled to return all warfare back on the heads of those who precipitate it.

This was a common reaction of David, when he was unjustly oppressed. **"For without cause they have hidden their net for me in a pit, which they have dug without cause for my life. Let destruction come upon him unexpectedly, and let his net that he has hidden catch himself; into that very destruction let him fall."** Ps 35:7-8.

Having resisted the first attack, Nehemiah continued with the work. *Verse 6*: **"So we built the wall, and the entire wall was joined together up to half its height, for the people had a mind to work."**

Satan's next ploy was to create confusion by creating attacks from different directions. *Verse 7*: **"Now it happened, when Sanballat, Tobiah, the Arabs, the Ammonites, and the Ashdodites heard that the walls of Jerusalem were being restored and the gaps were beginning to be closed, that they became very angry, and all of them conspired together to come and attack Jerusalem and create confusion."**

Nehemiah's response was crucial in situations when warfare abounded. He was constantly watchful, alert, and persistent. *Verse 9*: **"Nevertheless we made our prayer to our God, and because of them we set a watch against them day and night."**

Often Satan's plan of attack is to undermine the strength of God's servants by constant pressure, to the end that they become physically and spiritually depleted, and unable to see clearly.

Verse 10: **"Then Judah said, 'The strength of the labourers is failing, and there is so much rubbish that we are not able to build the wall.' And our adversaries said, 'They will neither know nor see anything, till we come into their midst and kill them and cause the work to cease.'"**

To strengthen the attack, Satan now used negative spirits in people in their midst to cause doubt and discouragement. *Verse 12:* **"So it was, when the Jews who dwelt near them came, that they told us ten times, 'From whatever place you turn, they will be upon us.'"**

At this point Nehemiah armed his brethren, and adopted a defensive position. He focused their attention on the Lord God, their mighty deliverer. *Verse 13:* **"Therefore I positioned men behind the lower parts of the wall, at the openings; and I set the people according to their families, with their swords, their spears, and their bows. And I looked, and arose and said to the nobles, to the leaders, and to the rest of the people, 'Do not be afraid of them. Remember the Lord, great and awesome, and fight for your brethren, your sons, your daughters, your wives, and your houses.'"**

Nehemiah and his brethren were confronted with what Paul refers to as **"the evil day"** - a time when it becomes obvious that we are being subjected to a sustained attack from Satan. In these circumstances Paul instructed us to **"take up the whole armour of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand (firm)."** Paul told the Ephesians that in such a day they were not to look for foes amongst man. **"For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places."** Eph 6:11-13.

First we are told to bind the truth to us. *Verse 14:* **"Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth,"** The belt held the whole armour together. Likewise the truth of Christ's victory over Satan, and we incorporated in that victory, is the key to our defence. Therefore we bind to us the truth of our salvation, our righteousness, our sanctification our redemption from Satan's kingdom and power, and our unity with the Lord Jesus Christ--raised with Him in authority to heavenly places, where we have **"the authority to trample on serpents and scorpions, (symbols of Satanic spirits) and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt (us)."** Luke 10:19.

Next, Paul tells us to **"put on the breastplate of righteousness."**(Verse 14). The blood of Jesus is the foundation of our righteousness, and so we are to declare the covering of the blood of Jesus over ourselves and all our circumstances. Because of our righteousness, or right standing before God, every legal ground of Satan is removed, having been **"nailed to the cross."** Col 2:14.

Next Paul tells us to **"shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace."** Many people interpret this as having a preparedness or readiness to preach the gospel, but this loses sight of the aspect of defensive armour. Figuratively, feet speak of our spiritual walk or direction. In the Hellenistic Greek, the word for 'preparation' has the sense of 'establishment' or 'firm foundation,' and this interpretation better suits the reading. Paul is saying that we should have our walk or direction firmly established on the foundation of the Lord's peace. If we allow our decisions and direction to be guided by the Lord's peace, we are safeguarded from being led astray.

The next piece of protective armour is the shield of faith. *Verse 16:* **"(A)bove all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts (accusations) of the wicked one."** In Thessalonians faith is aligned with love. **"But let us who are of the day be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love."** [1 Thes 5:8]. Again, in Galatians, faith is set with love. **"For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but**

faith working through love.” Gal 5:6. Christ loves us with a love that does not depend on our ‘goodness.’ Paul wrote to Timothy, **“If we are faithless, He remains faithful; He cannot deny Himself.”** 2 Tim 2:13. When we understand and embrace the love of the Lord, we can easily trust in His faithfulness to keep and protect us.

Next, Paul says, **“And take the helmet of salvation.”** Of course we have acquired eternal salvation through the cross of Christ. But we are being continually saved in our daily circumstances by the overcoming life of Jesus in us. Paul wrote, **“For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, having been reconciled, we shall be save by His life.”** Rom 5:10. The extent of our continual salvation is highlighted in the wider meaning of the Greek word ‘*sozo*’ for salvation. It means ‘to heal,’ ‘to make whole,’ ‘to preserve,’ and ‘to save.’ In putting on the helmet of salvation, we are to receive in our hearts and minds the saving power of the life of Jesus in us.

Next we are to take **“the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.”** The word of God, or the Scriptures, is to be wielded as Christ did when confronted by Satan in the wilderness. To each of Satan’s temptations, Jesus answered, **“It is written.”** Eg. **“He answered and said, “It is written, ‘Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.’”** Matt 4:4.

In the book of Revelation, the word of our testimony is listed among the overcoming weapons. **“And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death.”** Rev 12:11. The word ‘testimony’ means ‘to agree with.’ When we quote the Scriptures to refute Satan’s accusations, we are in effect saying, “I agree with what this word is saying, and it applies to me.”

And finally Paul advises those being confronted by “the evil day,” to pray to God continually, interceding in the Spirit. *Verse 18:* **“praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints.”** Eph 6:12-18.

Returning to the example of Nehemiah. Even though Satan’s efforts had been thwarted, the work continued in a state of alertness. Nehemiah and the people continued the work with vigilance. dressed in armour, with weapons ready. *Verse 15:* **“And it happened, when our enemies heard that it was known to us, and that God had brought their plot to nothing, that all of us returned to the wall, everyone to his work. So it was, from that time on, that half of my servants worked at construction, while the other half held the spears, the shields, the bows, and wore armour; and the leaders were behind all the house of Judah. Those who built on the wall, and those who carried burdens, loaded themselves so that with one hand they worked at construction, and with the other held a weapon. Every one of the builders had his sword girded at his side as he built. And the one who sounded the trumpet was beside me.”**

When it is apparent that warfare abounds, and the work is being opposed, we must be diligent in putting on our defensive armour daily, and being on the alert to use our spiritual weapons. The reading also shows the necessity of having the watchful oversight of elders, who must be ready to sound the alarm.

Next we are shown the benefits of unity and the support of the brethren in times of warfare. *Verse 19:* **“Then I said to the nobles, the rulers, and the rest of the people, “The work is great and extensive, and we are separated far from one another on the wall. “Wherever you hear the sound of the trumpet, rally to us there. Our God will fight for us.” So we laboured in the work, and half of the men held the spears from daybreak until the stars appeared. At the same**

time I also said to the people, "Let each man and his servant stay at night in Jerusalem, that they may be our guard by night and a working party by day."

In severe warfare, it is important that we solicit the help of others. **"Though one may be overpowered by another, two can withstand him. And a threefold cord is not quickly broken."** Eccl 4:12.

Once again we are shown the necessity to be fully clothed in our spiritual armour until the work is completed. *Verse 23:* **"So neither I, my brethren, my servants, nor the men of the guard who followed me took off our clothes, except that everyone took them off for washing."**

Nehemiah 6:1-15

The saga of Nehemiah's conflict with Sanballat and Tobiah, Satan's agents, continues in Chapter 6. This time their strategy was to compromise the work on the grounds of ecumenism, or a false cooperation. **"Now it happened when Sanballat, Tobiah, Geshem the Arab, and the rest of our enemies heard that I had rebuilt the wall, and that there were no breaks left in it (though at that time I had not hung the doors in the gates), that Sanballat and Geshem sent to me, saying, "Come, let us meet together among the villages in the plain of Ono." But they thought to do me harm. So I sent messengers to them, saying, "I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down. Why should the work cease while I leave it and go down to you?" But they sent me this message four times, and I answered them in the same manner."** But Nehemiah recognised the falseness of Sanballat's offer of cooperation, and his persistence was rebuffed by Nehemiah, as if to say, **"And what communion has light with darkness?"** 2 Cor 6:14.

Satan's attack continued unabated. This time he used lies and accusations of 'empire building' to make Nehemiah afraid of reprisals, and thereby stop the work. But Nehemiah was sure of his commission, and his position before God, and so trusted in Him to maintain his cause.

"Then Sanballat sent his servant to me as before, the fifth time, with an open letter in his hand. In it was written: It is reported among the nations, and Geshem says, that you and the Jews plan to rebel; therefore, according to these rumours, you are rebuilding the wall, that you may be their king. And you have also appointed prophets to proclaim concerning you at Jerusalem, saying, 'There is a king in Judah!' Now these matters will be reported to the king. So come, therefore, and let us consult together. Then I sent to him, saying, "No such things as you say are being done, but you invent them in your own heart." For they all were trying to make us afraid, saying, "Their hands will be weakened in the work, and it will not be done." Now therefore, O God, strengthen my hands." Neh 6:1-9.

Satan's next attack shows us how we must be alert to his subterfuges. This time he used one of Nehemiah's acquaintances with 'a word from the Lord.' Many ministries and works have been derailed by accepting and acting on a false 'word from the Lord.'

"Afterward I came to the house of Shemaiah the son of Delaiah, the son of Mehetabel, who was a secret informer; and he said, "Let us meet together in the house of God, within the temple, and let us close the doors of the temple, for they are coming to kill you; indeed, at night they will come to kill you." And I said, "Should such a man as I flee? And who is there such as I who would go into the temple to save his life? I will not go in!" Then I perceived that God had not sent him at all, but that he pronounced this prophecy against me because Tobiah and Sanballat had hired him. For this reason he was hired, that I should be afraid and act that way and sin, so that they might have cause for an evil report, that they might reproach me." Neh 6:10-13.

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