



For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.

Ephesians 6.12

Damascus Road Church

Gospel Class 6

Spiritual Warfare

“Where God is on one side, you may be sure to find the devil on the other.”
- William Gurnall, 1655

What is spiritual warfare?

Spiritual warfare is the scriptural teaching that God and His people have enemies who continually wage war against them in an effort to rob God of His glory in any way possible. But, God has given us great weapons such as truth, righteousness, the gospel, faith, salvation, Holy Spirit, Scripture, and prayer as our weapons of spiritual war (Ephesians 6:10-20).

Who are our enemies?

The Bible teaches that a Christian has three enemies: *the world, flesh, and devil* (James 4:1-7), and that each of these enemies use certain tactics. If we are aware of these tactics, we resist their attacks against us (2 Corinthians 2:11).

What names does Scripture give to Satan?

- Abaddon (Revelation 9:11) meaning “destroyer”
- Accuser (Revelation 12:10)
- Adversary (1 Peter 5:8)
- Apollyon (Revelation 9:11) meaning “destroyer”
- Beelzebub (Matthew 12:24)
- Belial (2 Corinthians 6:15)
- Deceiver (Revelation 12:9)
- Devil (Luke 4:13)
- Enemy (Matthew 13:28,39)
- Evil One (Matthew 13:28,39)
- Father of Lies (John 8:44)
- The god of this world (2 Cor 4:4)
- Great Dragon (Revelation 12:9)
- Lawless One (2 Thessalonians 2:18)
- Liar (John 8:44)
- Morning Star (Isaiah 14:12)
- Murderer (John 8:44)
- Prince of the Power of the Air (Ephesians 2:2)
- Ruler of this World (John 12:31)
- Satan (Acts 26:18)
- Serpent (Revelation 12:9)
- Tempter (1 Thessalonians 3:5)

Who is Satan and how does he work?

Essential to our study of Satan is to recognize that he is in **no way** equal to God. His knowledge, presence, and power are limited because he is an angelic being (a guardian cherub according to Ezekiel 28:14) **created by God** for the purpose of glorifying and serving God. However, he became proud in his heart and desired to be worshipped himself and exalted like God. So, he declared war upon God, with one-third of the angels joining his army to oppose God.

Judged by God for his sin, the Serpent was then cast down to the earth (Isaiah 14:11-23; Ezekiel 28:1-19; Daniel 8:10; Revelation 12:4). Upon the earth, he appeared as a serpent to tempt Adam and Eve by twisting God's word and lying (Genesis 3:1-24; Revelation 12:9, 20:2). After successfully tempting Adam and Eve to sin, the Serpent was judged and cursed by God for his sin and told that Jesus would ultimately come to completely defeat him, though Jesus would suffer physical harm in their conflict (Genesis 3:14-15).

The motivation for all of the Serpent's work is **pride and self-glory** instead of humility and God-glory (Ezekiel 28:2; James 4:6-7). Subsequently, one of his most powerful allies in opposing God's people is their own pride. Some have speculated as to why the Serpent continues in his war against God even though Scripture is clear that he will be ultimately defeated and painfully judged. It may be that the Serpent is indeed so proud that he has deceived himself and now believes that God is a liar who can be beaten.

In his war against God, the Serpent not only has a third of fallen angels who are now known as **demons** (II Peter 2:4; Revelation 9:1, 12:3-4), but he **also has people who are allies** in his army: either by demonic possession, demonic influence, or simply living according to their sinful sin nature and flesh. Such people include false prophets who speak for the Serpent (2 Peter 2:1), false apostles who begin ministries for the Serpent (2 Corinthians 11:13), false Christians who divide churches (Galatians 2:4), and false teachers who teach heretical doctrine for the Serpent (2 Peter 2:1).

The Serpent uses any means at his disposal, and has some tactics that have proven particularly effective for him on people. These include:

- torment (Acts 5:16)
- physical injury (Acts 8:4-8)
- deceit and trickery (Acts 13:9-10)
- sexual temptation (I Corinthians 7:5)
- false religion (I Corinthians 10:14-22)
- scheming (II Corinthians 2:10-11)
- secret and shameful ways that deceive people and distort Scripture (II Corinthians 4:2-4) sexual and marital relationships between believers and unbelievers (II Corinthians 6:15)
- the preaching of another Jesus and gospel (II Corinthians 11:1-4)
- anger and bitterness (Ephesians 4:17-32)
- foolishness and drunkenness (Ephesians 5:8-21)
- false miracles (II Thessalonians 2:9-10)
- blasphemy (I Timothy 1:20)
- false teachings (I Timothy 4:1-2)
- idle gossiping busybodies (I Timothy 5:11-15)
- persecution (I Peter 5:8-11)
- sin (I John 3:1-8)
- murder (I John 3:12)
- hatred (I John 3:13-15)
- false spirits (I John 4:1-6)
- idolatry (I John 5:18-21)

- deception (2 John 7)
- accusation (Revelation 12:10)

Whatever his tactics, the Serpent's ultimate goal for believers is typically a compromised and fruitless life beset by heresy and sin (I Timothy 4:1-2; I John 3:7-10) and ultimately death (John 8:44; I Peter 5:8).

We must heed James' command to know how Satan works: "Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you." (James 4:7). Likewise, Peter commands us to "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." (I Peter 5:8-9)

Has Jesus conquered Satan?

Yes. The Bible is emphatically clear that Jesus Christ has utterly defeated Satan and is Lord over the world, flesh, devil and demons.

Colossians 2:13-15 "When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your sinful nature, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins, having canceled the written code, with its regulations, that was against us and that stood opposed to us; he took it away, nailing it to the cross. And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross."

Hebrews 2:14-15 "Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death--that is, the devil-- and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death."

Can a Christian be possessed by a demon?

A Christian cannot be ultimately possessed by a demon because they are under the control and dominion of the Holy Spirit. But, under extreme circumstances it is possible for a believer to come under the influence of a demon (Matthew 16:22-23; Acts 5:3).

Can a non-Christian be possessed by a demon?

Yes, Jesus is clear that an unbeliever already has Satan as their father (John 8:43-44) and they have none of Christ's authority to protect them. The Bible does not indicate exactly how someone becomes demon-possessed but a simple reading of the gospels (Matthew includes a number of examples) or Acts does show that demon-possessed people did come to Jesus and the disciples and they were often delivered and converted.

What is the "flesh" and can we resist it?

The "flesh" is the seed of rebellion in us that is disposed to resist God's will, resist His will, and seek our own glory and pleasures in place of His (Galatians 5:19- 21; Colossians 3:5-8; Mark 7:21-23). Only a Christian has the possibility of resisting the temptations of the flesh because they alone are no longer in bondage to their flesh (Romans 6:6) but instead can live by the power of God the Holy Spirit (Galatians 5:16).

It is vital for Christians to weaken the sinful appetites of their flesh by not feeding and nurturing them (Romans 8:13). Practically, this would include reducing external stimuli that awakens the desires of the

flesh, and even eliminating the triggers of your flesh, though this is often nearly impossible in a fallen and sinful world.

What is the “world” and how does it work?

The “world” is basically corporate flesh joined into systems and structures of rebellion against God, that is bound together by the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh, and arrogant pride (1 John 2:15-17). A Christian must be vigilant to not love the world and all of its allure (1 John 2:15), including loving its sinful temptations and envying the ways of the arrogant and wicked (James 4:4-6). Therefore, a Christian must not be conformed to the pattern of thinking and living that dominates our world, but instead be transformed by a renewed mind that knows God’s will through Scripture and can therefore function with discernment in all of life (Romans 12:2).

Is it my fault when I sin?

James 1:13-15 “When tempted, no one should say, ‘God is tempting me.’ For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; but each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire he is dragged away and enticed. Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death.”

Yes. When we sin we cannot blame it on anyone but ourselves, and must take responsibility for our sin by taking it to God in prayerful repentance. Though Jesus has utterly defeated Satan, a Christian can give conquered ground in their lives to the Enemy by habitual sins such as anger, unforgiveness, bitterness, foul language, sexual immorality, impurity, greed, coarse joking etc. (Ephesians 4:26-5:11). Likewise, a Christian should avoid occultist entries into their life such as astrology, new age paraphernalia, charms, séances, Wicca, games like Ouija, etc. (Lev. 19:26, 31; 20:6; Deut. 18:9-13; Acts 19:18-20).

Additional Scriptures on the World

- John 15:19
- John 16:33
- John 17:14
- Acts 17:31
- 1 Corinthians 1:20-21
- 1 Corinthians 3:19
- Galatians 6:14
- Ephesians 2:1-2
- Colossians 2:8
- Colossians 2:20
- James 1:27
- James 4:4
- 1 John 2:15-17
- 1 John 5:19

Additional Scriptures on The Flesh

- Romans 7:5
- Romans 7:18
- Romans 8:3
- Romans 13:14
- Galatians 5:13

- Galatians 5:16-24
- Galatians 6:8
- Ephesians 2:1-3
- Colossians 1:24
- Colossians 2:11
- Colossians 2:13
- 2 Peter 2:10
- 2 Peter 2:18

Additional Scriptures on Satan & Demons

- Genesis 3:1-5
- Genesis 3:14-15
- Deuteronomy 32:16-17
- Job 1:6-12
- Psalm 106:37
- Ezekiel 28:11-19
- Matthew 4:1-11
- Matthew 4:23-25
- Matthew 7:21-23
- Matthew 8:14-17
- Matthew 8:28-34
- Matthew 12:22-28
- Matthew 12:43-45
- Matthew 17:14-23
- Acts 5:16
- Romans 8:37-39
- Romans 16:20
- II Corinthians 11:3
- II Corinthians 11:14
- Ephesians 6:10-20
- I John 3:8

For Further Reading

Precious Remedies Against Satan's Devices (a Puritan work) by Thomas Brooks

Powers of Darkness: Principalities & Powers in Paul's Letters by Clinton Arnold

The War Within by Jay Adams

Flirting With the World by John White

Temptation and Sin (a Puritan work) by John Owen

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