

**PRINCIPLES OF
SPIRITUAL WARFARE
IN THE WILDERNESS**

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There are three spheres of spiritual warfare identifiable on the basis of the context, the purpose, place, and object of warfare. Accordingly, we can identify: Warfare for deliverance from Egypt/Babylon, Warfare in the wilderness, and Warfare in relation to the Promised Land.

In this mediation we shall be taking a brief look at warfare for deliverance from Egypt/Babylon and warfare in relation to the Promised Land before zeroing in on the main burden which is *Spiritual warfare in the wilderness*.

Warfare for deliverance from Egypt/Babylon

The purpose of this warfare is the recovery of the soul from the 'world', worldliness, carnality, idolatry, and from bondage of sin and death. Examined from another perspective, it is warfare for the recovery of souls from the religious world of our day, the systems of men — that order of things that no longer serve the purpose of God and consequently no longer glorify His name. Men are held bound as prisoners in the courts of religion purporting to serve the interest of God but servicing the ego and interest of mere mortals. This can be likened to the deliverance of

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the children of Israel from the land of Egypt, thus revealing to us that the warfare is fought on heathen territory. The subject, that is man, is in captivity in a strange land in the enemy camp. He is helpless and does not have what it takes to free himself. Outside intervention is therefore required to set him free from the stranglehold of the powerful captor: ***“And the Lord brought us forth out of Egypt with a mighty hand and with an outstretched arm, and with great terribleness, and with signs and with wonders.” – Deuteronomy 26:8.***

In this sphere man can only cry out to God for deliverance from affliction and overbearing oppression of the captor. Deuteronomy 26:6-7 refers: ***“And the Egyptians mistreated us, and afflicted us, and laid hard bondage on us. Then we cried to the Lord God of our fathers, and the Lord heard our voice, and looked on our affliction and our labor and our oppression (NKJV).”*** This warfare is fought entirely by the Lord Himself on behalf of man. We see this in Exodus 14:13-14 in the case of the children of Israel: ***“And Moses said unto the people, fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord, which he will show to***

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you today; for the Egyptians whom ye have seen today, ye shall see again no more for ever. The Lord shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace.”

It is obvious that man in the world, for as long as he continues to enjoy the pleasures of the world abundantly supplied by the tail of the dragon, may not have cause to cry out for deliverance. But Satan by his nature does not eternally give ‘pleasure’. He knows that his days are numbered and whatever he gives his prey is only bait. Once in the net, he unleashes his terror, torture, and affliction on the prey. What Satan gives with one hand, he calls for in return a hundredfold with the other hand.

Herein rests our responsibility as laborers in the vineyard of our God. We must continue to intercede for our loved ones who are still in the ‘world’ whether in Egypt or in Babylon. We are to continue to sow the seed of God’s word in their hearts. Recall that in the face of unbearable affliction and oppression the children of Egypt **remembered the God of their fathers**. Do not give up on the man or woman you have been talking to and for whom you have been interceding. One of these days he will have cause

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to remember your God and he will cry out for deliverance. We are to teach them to appreciate and to apply the blood of the lamb as a provision God has made for the deliverance of man.

Warfare in relation to the Promised Land

When spiritual warfare is fought in the Promised Land, it is called divine warfare. When we engage in divine warfare, the wilderness situation still continues. Warfare for the Promised Land is a contest for the land occupied by others. The issues at stake do not relate to our daily need such as daily bread, our health our business, etc. We are standing in the Promised Land seeking the progress of God's work, seeking to extend the frontiers of God's kingdom and to bring the government and rule of the King over the people of the land. Take note that when you engage in divine warfare, you must take steps to first secure or protect your interests in the wilderness. We must not be like David who led his men out in conquest of other lands only to return and find that their wives, children, and their substance had been carted away by the Amalekites (I Sam. 30:1-7). We are to learn from the examples of the Reubenites and the children of Gad. Remember

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these tribes of Israel who chose to remain on ‘this side the Jordan’. As a condition for possessing their choice inheritance, they were required to fight along side their brethren to enter into their inheritance. This is what they told Moses in Numbers 32:16-17:

“...We will build sheepfolds here for our cattle and cities for our little ones; but we ourselves will go ready armed before the children of Israel until we have brought them unto their place: and our little ones shall dwell in fenced cities because of the inhabitants of the land.”

This is a well thought-out plan to secure their business, as represented by ‘little ones’. So in divine warfare it will appear you are in two places at the same time. You seem to be away fighting the Lord’s battle but at the same time you are present where you are protecting your inheritance.

In divine warfare God takes the lead and you follow. You are the one seen but the Lord is at the head making things happen. Therefore the battle is fought with the plural noun ‘we’. You do not

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say 'I' but 'we', because Christ the head is at the front. This principle is demonstrated in Revelation 12:7 "***And there was war in heaven; Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels.***" So it is the Lord leading and his army following. Michael, a type of Christ takes the lead and his angels; a type of the body of Christ follows. So Christ's head and body go into the war.

Another point to note is that since the warfare is the Lord's, He has a definite strategy for it. Wisdom therefore demands that we go to Him for an insight into how He intends to have the battle executed. In this connection we are required to wait on the Lord for His instructions. In waiting we are to also pray for the outpouring of His Spirit for the graces we need for the proper harnessing of what we are given by the Lord. His Spirit, completely outpoured, takes the form of corn, wine, and oil. (Joel 2:24). Corn, the bread of heaven to give spiritual strength; wine, the joy of the Lord's battle despite the challenges; oil, the anointing and power. The outpouring of the Spirit comes with increase of wisdom, knowledge, understanding, life, and power. Joshua 6:1-2 is of

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relevance here: *“Now Jericho was securely shut up because of the children of Israel: none went out and none came in. And the Lord said unto Joshua, See, I have given into thy hand Jericho and the king thereof, and the mighty men of valor...”*

The succeeding verses detail out the instruction for the battle. The Lord was completely in charge.

SPIRITUAL WARFARE IN THE WILDERNESS

The whole span of your Christian life until you break into incorruptibility is your wilderness. The wilderness is the training ground for all believers. Training in sonship, training in spiritual warfare, exposure to all manner of trials and testing aimed at bringing the believer to full stature of Jesus Christ. The Lord by His Spirit is the facilitator of this process. It is pertinent to point out from the outset that every true child of God is enlisted in the army of God.

In discussing spiritual warfare in the wilderness we shall be drawing largely on the wilderness experiences of the children of Israel.

Once delivered from the ‘world’ the young believer begins his training. Like the mother eagle, the Lord continues to take the lead in

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fighting his battles while training him in the act of spiritual warfare. We see this principle at work in the experiences of the children of Israel. As they marched out of Egypt, the Lord chose to take them out through the Red Sea. This was to avoid exposing them so early to the hostile nations on the alternative routes (Exodus 13:17-18). This is because they were not yet schooled in the act of warfare. After taking them through the Red Sea, they were expected to draw inspiration from that experience and henceforth fight their battles trusting God for support and victory. Salvation restores man to Eden estate. But experience has shown that the abundant life that Adam had before the fall was no longer available to man just by merely wishing it. A fight of faith is now required to possess every aspect of that estate. While we were away another possessed it. Now that it has been repurchased for us, we must brace up to chase the impostor away from our land. Our inheritance is the issue here. Let's do a little illustration here to help our understanding. Our father bought a piece of land in our name and delivered the title documents to us. On getting to the land we met another fully occupying the land and claiming ownership

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without valid title. We returned to our father crying asking for help. This is the situation with most of us today. We are waiting for God to come down from heaven and compel the devil and his agents to restore to us that which the Lord has freely given to us by his death and resurrection.

The enemy is contending with you in your land. Land here stands for yourself — your peace, your safety, your health, freedom from inward danger, freedom from outward danger, prosperity and peace for yourself and your family. You have a primary responsibility of arising to chase the adversary way. In doing so be sure to deal a fatal blow on the enemy so he does not stage a come back. You cannot fold your arms and expect another to fight your battle. You must be in the forefront fighting so that another fighting in your interest would give increase.

In the wilderness three things are certain: You are free, you are in your own land and you are to enjoy it to the full even as the scriptures describe it. You are saved, you are delivered, you are healed, you have been blessed with all blessing that God has graciously given to you, but there are intruders. They come provoking war as they

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set themselves to stop you from enjoying peace in your land.

The law of battle in the wilderness is given to us in Numbers 10:9, ***“And if ye go to war in your land against the enemy that oppresseth you, then ye shall blow an alarm with the trumpets; and ye shall be remembered before the Lord your God, and ye shall be saved from your enemies.”*** Remember Romans 10:10b ***“... with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.”*** In the battle you take the lead, inspired by God’s word, and the Lord follows you to confirm the victory. If you do not take the lead and fight according to the truth declared in the word of God respecting you, God cannot intervene. The rule is clear: you shall sound an alarm with the trumpet. The trumpet is the ministry of God’s word. God’s word has been revealed and you are declaring the truth that you have received respecting your situation, and you are doing so with aggression. You are saying, “this is God’s will for me, it must hold.” When you take the lead, inspired by God’s word, to make your utterances you shall have whatsoever you say, in Jesus name. The scripture states clearly ***“... and ye shall be remembered before and***

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the Lord your God, and ye shall be saved from your enemies” Numb. 10:9b.

One obvious contradiction is that the Lords people always want to stand in the battle quoting the scripture “... stand still and see the salvation of the Lord, and the Lord will fight for you.” This may have worked for you when you were a baby Christian, when the Lord fought all your battles from ‘Goshen to the Red Sea’. The Lord takes it upon Himself to train you in the act of spiritual warfare. Once this is accomplished you are fully enrolled in the army of the Lord. You must be 20 years old to be enrolled in the army of the Lord. Coming to twenty years (symbolic twenty years) in spiritual age requires that you know how to use God’s word to fight for yourself.

Every child of God must fight the good fight of faith. Lay hold on eternal life. Eternal life is a tool for the battle. Thank God we already have eternal life (John 5:24). You may wish to confess as follows: ***I have eternal life. It’s my tool for fellowship with God. It’s my arsenal for warfare. Eternal life is a reality, I have eternal life now and by this life I have sight of the scriptures. Being born from above, I see the kingdom of God; I have an***

appreciative understanding of what the kingdom is all about. Inspired by what I see, I can fight for myself. Amen.

Another tool for this battle is righteousness. Again, the Lord has bestowed upon us his righteousness. He covereth us with the robe of righteousness (Isaiah 61:10b) and He is freely called “the Lord our righteousness” in Jeremiah 23:6. Then in Isaiah 54:17b it is written “***...and their righteousness is of me, saith the Lord.***” But we have a responsibility to maintain the garment of righteousness because the righteousness of the upright shall deliver them (Prov. 11:6, 13:6). We must be mindful that “***No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier***” (2 Tim 2:4).

We must be alive to the fierce nature of this conflict and be mindful that we wrestle not against flesh and blood but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. The divine counsel in the circumstance is that we constantly put on the whole armor of

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God, that we may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil (Ephesians 6:11-12).

In concluding this meditation let's remind ourselves of the provisions of Revelation 12:11, the time tested divine prescriptions for overcoming in spiritual warfare in the wilderness. ***“And they overcame him by blood of the lamb and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death.”***

The ingredients are:

- The blood of the lamb
- The word of our testimony
- Our patience and perseverance

The first has been graciously provided by God. We must learn to apply it for our benefit, for our cleansing, and for our defense. When Jesus died and his blood was emptied, the veil that kept us away was torn beyond repair. What was privy to the High Priest once a year has become ceaselessly open to as many as desire it.

The blood is laid upon the altar. Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace that we may obtain grace and help in time of need (Hebrews 4:16). The second ingredient is our responsibility. We are called to exercise faith towards God. We should give time to the study of God's word to

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discover for ourselves our present inheritance and insist on enjoying it to the fullest. Our patience and perseverance will be tested, especially where the battle becomes protracted. We must remain resolute and rugged in our determination to have the will of God fulfilled in our lives. The good news is that before we ever set out to engage in this battle the result is already known. In Deuteronomy 20:3-4 we are assured “...**Hear, O Israel, ye approach this day unto battle against your enemies: let not your heart faint, fear not, and do not tremble, neither be ye terrified because of them; for the Lord your God is He that goeth with you, to fight for you against your enemies, to save you.**” Victory is ours. To God be the glory!