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SPIRITUAL WARFARE

DEREK PRINCE



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CONTENTS

PART 1: THE NATURE OF THE WAR

1. Two Opposing Kingdoms9
2. Satan's Headquarters..... 17
3. Battle of Angels.....25
4. The Weapons and the Battleground.....33
5. The Basis of Our Victory39

PART 2: OUR DEFENSIVE ARMOR

6. The Full Armor of God.....49
7. The Girdle of Truth55
8. The Breastplate of Righteousness.....59
9. The Shoes of the Preparation of the Gospel .67
10. The Shield of Faith.....71
11. The Helmet of Salvation75
12. The Sword of the Spirit83
13. The Unprotected Area89

PART 3: WEAPONS OF ATTACK

14. Taking the Offensive95
15. The Weapon of Prayer103
16. The Weapon of Praise.....111
17. The Weapon of Preaching.....119
18. The Weapon of Testimony129

- ABOUT THE AUTHOR.....137

PART 1:

THE NATURE OF THE WAR

CHAPTER ONE

TWO OPPOSING KINGDOMS



There are many pictures of God's people in the New Testament. In Ephesians, for instance, God's people are presented through the following pictures: a legislative assembly, a family, a temple, and as the bride of Christ. However, the final picture of God's people in Ephesians is that of an army.

This army is committed to fight a war that is global in its proportions, that affects and includes every portion of this globe on which we live. In fact, even the word *global* does not do justice to the scope of this conflict. It embraces not only the earth, but extends beyond the earth into the very heavens. In fact, the adjective that correctly describes this

SPIRITUAL WARFARE

conflict is not *global* but *universal*. It includes the entire created universe.

The Scripture that most clearly introduces this conflict and describes its nature is Ephesians 6:10–12. I will first cite the *New International Version*, and then I will compare some other versions.

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.*

Paul took it for granted that, as Christians, we are involved in a war for which we need the appropriate armor, and that our adversary is the Devil himself. He then went on in verse 12 to explain more fully the nature of this war:

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.* (NIV)

In the *New American Standard Version*, this verse reads,

¹² *For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the*

TWO OPPOSING KINGDOMS

powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places.

The Living Bible, which is not exactly a literal translation but a paraphrase, reads as follows:

¹² For we are not fighting against people made of flesh and blood, but against persons without bodies—the evil rulers of the unseen world, those mighty satanic beings and great evil princes of darkness who rule this world; and against huge numbers of wicked spirits in the spirit world.

Whichever version you wish to follow, it is clear that as Christians we are engaged in a titanic conflict that staggers the mind to consider.

I have meditated so often and so long on Ephesians 6:12 in the original Greek that I have come up with my own paraphrase. You might call this “the Prince version.”

For our wrestling match is not against flesh and blood, not against persons with bodies, but against rulers with various areas and descending orders of authority, against the world dominators of this present darkness, against spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenlies.

SPIRITUAL WARFARE

Let me explain why I chose some of those words. I say, “rulers with various areas and descending orders of authority,” because that pictures a very highly structured and well-organized kingdom with descending orders of authority and different rulers and sub-rulers responsible for different areas of their territories. I use the word *dominators* in “the world dominators of this present darkness,” because the term *dominate* so vividly describes the way Satan treats the human race.

Notice that all translations except *The Living Bible* emphasize that the headquarters of this highly organized kingdom is in the heavenlies.

Here are some points that emerge from Ephesians 6:12. First, the conflict involves all Christians—not some special group like missionaries, pastors, or evangelists—but all of us. Many Christians have not seen it that way.

The King James Version of verse 12 states, “*For we wrestle not against flesh and blood.*” I once heard someone comment that most Christians punctuate that verse wrongly. They read, “We wrestle not—period.” In other words, all we need do is sit in the church pew and sing hymns. However, Paul said, “We’re in a wrestling match, but it’s not against flesh and blood.”

TWO OPPOSING KINGDOMS

Consider also the import of the term *wrestling match*. Wrestling is the most intense of all forms of conflict between two persons. Every part of the body, every skill, and every trick must be used for success. It is a total conflict.

Satan has a highly organized kingdom. In that kingdom, there are various areas and levels of authority. The headquarters of this kingdom are in the heavenly regions. That is a staggering fact, but it is quite clear.

The fact that Satan heads a highly organized kingdom astonishes some people, yet there are many clear indications of this in the Scriptures. In Matthew 12:22–28, the following incident in the ministry of Jesus is recorded. Jesus had brought healing to a demon-possessed man who was blind and mute by driving out the evil spirit.

²³ *All the people were astonished and said, "Could this be the Son of David?"*

²⁴ *But when the Pharisees heard this, they said, "It is only by Beelzebub, the prince of demons, that this fellow drives out demons."* (vv. 23–24 NIV)

Beelzebub means, literally, "lord of flies." It is the title of Satan particularly as the ruler over demons because the demons are

SPIRITUAL WARFARE

compared to the whole insect domain. Jesus responded to the Pharisees in the following verses:

²⁵ Jesus knew their thoughts and said to them, “Every kingdom divided against itself will be ruined, and every city or household divided against itself will not stand.

²⁶ “If Satan drives out Satan, he is divided against himself. How then can his kingdom stand?” (Matthew 12:25–26 NIV)

There is a clear implication that, first, Satan has a kingdom. Second, it is not divided but highly organized. Third, it stands and has not yet been overthrown. Jesus continued,

²⁷ “And if I drive out demons by Beelzebub, by whom do your people drive them out? So then, they will be your judges.

²⁸ “But if I drive out demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.” (vv. 27–28 NIV)

Jesus here mentioned another kingdom, the kingdom of God. In particular, He described one point where the conflict between these two kingdoms is brought out into the open. He said, “When I drive out demons by the Spirit of God, then you know the kingdom of God has come.” The implication is that the ministry of driving out demons brings

TWO OPPOSING KINGDOMS

the forces of Satan's kingdom out into the open and also demonstrates the superiority of the kingdom of God because the demons are driven out under the authority of the kingdom of God. In the final analysis, there are two kingdoms in opposition: the kingdom of God and the kingdom of Satan.

Again, in writing to the Colossians, Paul said the following:

¹² Giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the kingdom of light.

¹³ For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves,

¹⁴ in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. (Colossians 1:12–14 NIV)

Notice again, there are two domains or kingdoms. There is the kingdom of light, in which our inheritance lies, but there is also the dominion of darkness. The word translated “*dominion*” is the Greek word *exusia*, which means “authority.” In other words, whether we like it or not, Satan has authority. He is the ruler of a kingdom that the Bible recognizes. So these two kingdoms are engaged in mortal warfare, and the war is coming to its climax in our day as this age comes to a close.