

Spiritual Warfare

Spring 2022

Lesson 1 – Believing the Bible: Introduction to Spiritual Warfare

Definition

Spiritual warfare is the **multilevel** conflict between good and evil on the supernatural plane with the prehistoric rebellion of Lucifer and transferred onto the natural plane with the fall of man. Satan, man's adversary, continues to work to **deceive** and divert people from salvation in Jesus Christ, and to **harass** and **hinder** Christians through enticement to sin and exploitation of weaknesses (Tom White, *The Believer's Guide to Spiritual Warfare*, 22).

Western Culture, Rationalism, and Naturalism

- The Enlightenment was marked by the pursuit of happiness, **sovereignty** of reason, and the evidence of the senses as the **primary** source of **knowledge**.
- **Western culture** is steeped in **rationalism** and **naturalism**. This means that we resist accepting truths that don't seem rational at first glance and can't be explained by **science**. This in turn makes it difficult to believe in the **supernatural** and **metaphysical**.
- Naturalism: the philosophical belief that everything arises from **natural** properties and causes, and supernatural or spiritual explanations are **excluded** or discounted.
- Rationalism: the theory that **reason** rather than experience is the **foundation** of certainty in knowledge.

We simply cannot subtract the Devil, along with demons, angels, principalities, powers, and elemental spirits, without doing **violence** to the shape of the Christian faith, as transmitted by Scripture and tradition, our primary sources (Karl E. Braaten, *That All May Believe: A Theology of the Gospel and the Mission of the Church*, 109-110).

Any view which would affirm the orthodox concept of a theistic God and yet deny the existence of the devil is inherently **untenable** (Wallace A. Murphy, "Can Theism Survive without the Devil?" *Religious Studies* 21 (1985), 231).

The "Mysterium Tremendum" of God

- God is a mystery that is both **terrifying** and **fascinating**.
- That God is *holy* means that God is **other**.
- God is **ineffable**, which means that God is too great to be expressed or described in **words**.
- God is **uncreated**, which means that he is **infinite**.
- God is **transcendent**, meaning that he is not **restricted** by the creation in any way.
- God is the **I Am** (Ex. 3:14)

The Knowability of God

- While God is not **containable** by human logic, he **reveals** himself.
- **General** revelation is the way that God reveals himself to all people at all times and in all places. (nature and moral conscience)
- **Special** revelation is the way that God reveals himself for personal relationship (the Bible and Jesus).

The Supernatural Worldview of Christianity

- The Bible affirms that while God is a God of **order**, reason, structure, and intelligent design, he is also **mysterious** to the created order because God is **infinite** and uncreated. Because God cannot be limited to the confines of human logic and cannot be measured by that which is limited, there is an aspect of reality that **transcend** the human mind, logic, and reason.
- The biblical authors understood this, which is why the Bible affirms that the **supernatural** is real.
- A part of the supernatural worldview of the biblical authors was the reality of miracles, the unseen realm, and spiritual **warfare**.

Christianity's Witness of Biblical Affirmation of Miracles (the Apostles' Creed)

- The **virgin** birth (Matt. 1:18)
- The **bodily** resurrection of Jesus (Jn. 20:27)
- Jesus is **God** (Jn 1:1)
- Jesus ascended into **heaven** (Acts 1:9)
- Jesus descends into **hell** (Eph. 4:9)

Biblical Affirmations of the Unseen Realm

- **Genesis 11:7** - Come, **let us** go down and there confuse their language, so that they may not understand one another's speech.
- **Job 1:6** - Now there was a day when the **sons** of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and **Satan** also came among them.
- **Psalms 82:1** - God has taken his place in the **divine council**; in the midst of the **gods** he holds judgment.
- **Isaiah 6:1-2** - In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and the train of his robe filled the temple. Above him stood the **seraphim**. Each had six wings: with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew.
- **1 Kings 22:19-22**
- **2 Corinthians 4:18** - as we look not to things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal.

Biblical Affirmation of Spiritual Warfare

- **Luke 4:1-2** - And Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness for forty days, being tempted by the **devil**. And he ate nothing during those days. And when they were ended, he was hungry.
- **Luke 22:3** - Then **Satan** entered into Judas called Iscariot, who was of the number of the twelve.
- **2 Corinthians 11:13-14** - For such men are false apostles, deceitful workmen, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. And no wonder, for even **Satan** disguises himself as an angel of light.
- **Ephesians 6:10-12** - Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the **devil**.

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.

- **1 Timothy 4:1** - Now the Spirit expressly says that in later times some will depart from the faith by devoting themselves to deceitful **spirits** and teachings of **demons**...
- **James 4:9** - Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the **devil**, and he will flee from you.
- **Jude 9** - But when the archangel Michael, contending with the devil, was disputing about the body of Moses, he did not presume to pronounce a blasphemous judgment, but said, "The Lord rebuke you."
- **Revelation 12:7-9** - Now war arose in heaven, Michael and his angels fighting against the dragon. And the dragon and his angels fought back, but he was defeated, and there was no longer any place for them in heaven. And the great dragon was thrown down, that ancient serpent, who is called the devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world—he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him.
- **Daniel 10:13-14** - The prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me twenty-one days, but Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, for I was left there with the kings of Persia, and came to make you understand what is to happen to your people in the latter days. For the vision is for days yet to come."
- **Matthew 16:17-19** - And Jesus answered him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven. And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of **hell** shall not prevail against it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."
- **Mark 1:39** - And he went throughout all Galilee, preaching in their synagogues and casting out **demons**.
- **Mark 1:32-34** - That evening at sundown they brought to him all who were sick or oppressed by demons. And the whole city was gathered together at the door. And he healed many who were sick with various diseases, and cast out many demons. And he would not permit the demons to speak, because they knew him.
- **Luke 9:1-2** - And he called the twelve together and gave them power and authority over all demons and to cure diseases, and he sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God and to heal.