

Two Opposing Kingdoms



Spiritual Warfare (Part 1)
by Derek Prince

It's good to be with you again at the beginning of a new week, sharing with you Keys to Successful Living that God has placed in my hand through many years of personal experience and Christian ministry.

But first, let me say "Thank you" to those of you who have been writing to me. Before I finish this talk we will be giving you a mailing address to which you may write. It means a great deal to me to hear how this radio ministry of mine has been helping you and blessing you, so please take time to write, even if it's only a brief note.

Our theme throughout this week will be spiritual warfare. There are many pictures of God's people in the New Testament. In Ephesians, for instance, God's people are presented under 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, an army committed to fight a war that is global in its proportions, one that affects and includes every portion of this globe on which we live. In fact, even the word "global" doesn't do justice to the scope of this conflict. It embraces not only this globe, the earth, but it extends beyond earth into the very heavens. In fact, the adjective which correctly describes this conflict is not "global" but "universal," it includes the entire created universe.

The Scriptures which most clearly introduce this conflict and describe its nature are found in Ephesians 6. I am going to read Ephesians 6:10-12. I am going to read first in the New International Version, then I am going to compare some other versions. Ephesians 6, beginning at verse 10:

> "Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the whole armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes." (NIV)

Let me pause there and point out that Paul takes it for granted that as Christians we are involved in a war, that we need the appropriate armor for this war, and that our adversary is the devil himself. Then he goes on in verse 12 to explain more fully the nature of this war:

> "For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the power of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms."

Now I am going to read also the New American Standard version of verse 12:

> "For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places." (NAS)

And then I am going to read also the Living Bible, which is, as it states itself, not exactly a literal translation but a paraphrase:

> "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." (TLB)

Whichever version you wish to follow, the fact is clear: that as Christians we are engaged in a titanic conflict, something that actually staggers the mind to consider. And yet, the statements are so clear. I have meditated so often and so long on that verse, Ephesians 6:12, in the original Greek that I have come up with my own sort of paraphrase. You might call this "the Prince version" and I am going to give this to you now.

> "For our wrestling match is not against flesh and blood [but I like The Living Bible there where it says:] 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."

Let me explain why I choose some of those words. I say "rulers with various areas and descending orders of authority" because the picture is of a very, very highly structured and well organized kingdom with descending orders of authority and different rulers and sub-rulers responsible for different areas of their territory. And then I use the word "dominators," "the world-dominators of this present darkness," because I believe dominate so vividly describes the way Satan treats the human race. And then note that all the translations except The Living Bible that we followed emphasized that the headquarters of this highly organized kingdom is in the heavenlies. This is very clear.

Let me bring out some points that emerge from this verse that we have been discussing. First of all, the conflict involves all Christians. It is not some special group of persons like missionaries or pastors or evangelists, but it is all of us. It is absolutely general in its application to all Christians. Many Christians have not seen it that way. I didn't quote the King James Version of verse 12, but it says:

> "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood..."

I once heard someone comment on this that most Christians punctuate that verse wrong. They read it this way: "We wrestle not, period." In other words, after that we sit in the church pew and sing hymns. But Paul says, "We're in a wrestling match but it's not against flesh and blood."

Then consider the import of the word "wrestling match." Wrestling is the most intense of all forms of conflict between two persons. Every part of the body, every kind of skill, every kind of trick has to be used for success. It's total conflict.

Then I have already pointed out but let me say it again, Satan has a highly organized kingdom. And in that kingdom there are various areas and levels of authority.

And then, I have said it already but I will point it out once more, the headquarters of this kingdom are in the heavenly regions. That is staggering, but it is clear.

The fact that Satan heads a highly organized kingdom astonishes some people. Yet there are many clear indications of this in the Scriptures. I want to read you some words of Jesus about this in Matthew 12:22-28. This is an incident in the ministry of Jesus. He had brought healing to a demon possessed man who was blind and mute. He brought healing by driving out the demon, the evil spirit. This is how it goes on:

> "All the people were astonished and said, 'Could this be the Son of David?' But when the Pharisees heard this, they said, 'It is only by Beelzebub, the prince of demons, that this fellow drives out demons.'" (NIV)

Beelzebub means literally, "lord of flies." It is the title of Satan particularly as the ruler over demons because the demons are compared to flies or to the whole insect domain. Now, let's read the comment of Jesus:

> "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. If Satan drives out Satan, he is divided against himself. How then can his kingdom stand?'" (NIV)

There's a certain clear implication of that. First of all, Satan has a kingdom; secondly, it is not divided, it is highly organized; and thirdly, it stands, it has not yet been overthrown. Then Jesus goes on:

> "And if I drive out demons by Beelzebub, by whom do your people drive them out? So then, they will be your judges. But if I drive out demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you." (NIV)

You see that Jesus there mentions another kingdom, the kingdom of God. First He speaks of Satan's kingdom, then He speaks of the kingdom of God. And He describes one particular point where the conflict between these two kingdoms is brought right out into the open. He says, "When I drive out demons by the Spirit of God, then you know the kingdom of God has come." I think the implication is that this particular ministry of driving out demons brings out the forces of Satan's kingdom into the open and also demonstrates the superiority of the kingdom of God because the demons are driven out under the authority of that kingdom. So there are two kingdoms in opposition: the kingdom of God, the kingdom of Satan.

Let us also look in Colossians 1:12-14. Paul says:

> "Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: in whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins..."

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" there in Greek is exousia, which means "authority." In other words, whether we like it or not, Satan has authority. He is the ruler of a kingdom which 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.

Well, our time is up for today but I'll be back with you again tomorrow at this time. Tomorrow I will continue with this theme of spiritual warfare. In particular, I will be dealing with the location of Satan's kingdom, the fact that his headquarters are in the heavenlies.

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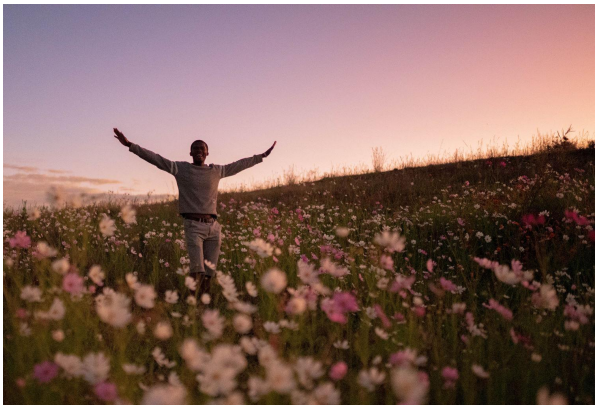
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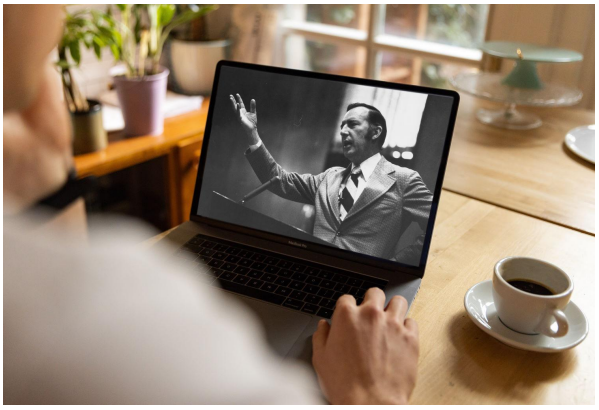
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