

BIBLICAL PATTERNS OF SPIRITUAL WARFARE & INTERCESSION

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INTRODUCTION:

Spiritual warfare is in the news. Prayer walks, spiritual mapping, forty-day fasts, binding the spiritual hierarchies over our cities, and many other exciting activities are being undertaken in the hope of hastening the return of our Lord. Traditional exercises in spiritual warfare, such as intercession, have moved from the cloistered circle of a few dedicated and called practitioners into the popular life of the Church. Some the things being done in the name of spiritual warfare are causing controversy in the church, especially among missiologists and churches deeply involved in missions.

In the midst of all of this activity (and controversy), it is our responsibility to ask, "what is the biblical pattern for overcoming the forces of darkness?" This paper will examine the scriptural model for overcoming Satan and his minions. We will not deal with matters of personal warfare (overcoming temptation, etc.), except as it relates to the struggle on the larger field of battle. Unless otherwise noted, all quotations will be from the New American Standard Version.

SECTION ONE: FORCES THAT INFLUENCE THE BEHAVIOR AND DESTINY OF THE NATIONS

PART ONE: THE ENEMY

Ephesians 6:12

There are many portions of Scripture that give us glimpses and windows into the kingdom of the enemy. None is more complete than Paul's Ephesian letter.

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. (Ephesians 6:12)

This verse describes a four-level hierarchy of evil forces. The first level consists of the "rulers." The Greek term, here is, ἀρχαί (archai) meaning literally, "the primaries." In its usual use, the term refers to those who take orders from no one, but have authority in themselves. These are the spiritual forces that are at the top of the chain of command in Satan's kingdom.

The second level, Paul calls "authorities," or "powers." The word is, ἐξουσίαι, (egzousiai). This term means, "authorities," and describes those to whom the primaries have delegated authority in certain spheres. When one of these "authorities" is acting within his assigned sphere, it is as if the "primary" under whom he serves were acting.

The third level is the "world forces of this darkness." The Greek terminology is τοῦ κοσμοκράτου τοῦ σκοτοῦ τουτοῦ (tous kosmokratōr tou skotou toutou). Literally, the expression is, "The world rulers of this darkness." This terminology would lead us to conclude that these are the spiritual forces behind the evil in nations and cities.

The fourth level is the **pneumatikoi** (*pneumatikoi*), literally, "the spirituals." If we continue the pattern displayed in the first three terms, we would conclude that these are the demonic forces that are the "footsoldiers" in Satan's army.

PART TWO: TWO KINGDOMS, TWO HEIRARCHIES

Daniel 10

Daniel's experience in intercession, as described in Daniel 10, leads us to conclude that God and Satan both have "archangels." Daniel was almost 90 years of age, when this vision occurred. He had lived in Babylon for seventy-two years, having been brought there as a teen-ager. When Daniel received this vision, Cyrus already had defeated Babylon and given the decree for the Hebrew captives to return to Jerusalem and rebuild the walls of the city. Daniel, because of the divine revelations that had been given to him, had gained a position of influence at the court of Cyrus. Daniel was not free to leave his post and join the pilgrims who were returning to Palestine, unless he received a divine injunction. As he watched the last Jerusalem-bound caravan leave the western gate of the city, he was concerned about his people. Reports concerning problems among the Jerusalem settlers began to filter back to Babylon. After two years, a delegation of Samaritans arrived at Cyrus' court, bringing accusations against the Jewish settlers. Daniel began to mourn for his people.

God had given Daniel several visions concerning the future (beginning in Daniel 8). After each vision, even after some enlightenment from angelic interpreters, Daniel wrote that he did not understand what was going to happen to his people (Daniel 8:16-27; 9:20-10:1). In his mourning, Daniel entered into a three-week selective fast, eating only common food, and praying for understanding. All of Daniel 10 should be read to understand this episode.¹ The words of the heavenly messenger, recorded in verses 12-13, are of special significance to our study:

Then he said to me, "Do not be afraid, Daniel, for from the first day that you set your heart on understanding this and on humbling yourself before your God, your words were heard, and I have come in response to your words. "But the prince of the kingdom of Persia was withstanding me for twenty-one days; then behold, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, for I had been left there with the kings of Persia.

A key player in this drama is Michael, an angel whose name means, "who is as God." It should be noted that Michael is described in Daniel 12:1 as the angel-prince who stands guard over the people of Israel:

"Now at that time Michael, the great prince who stands guard over the sons of your people, will arise. And there will be a time of distress such as never occurred since there was a nation until that time; and at that time your people, everyone who is found written in the book, will be rescued (Note that in Daniel 11:1, Michael also is described to Daniel as, "your prince").

¹ Note that the theophany of Daniel 10:4-6 corresponds to the theophany of Ezekiel 1:26ff and elsewhere in Ezekiel. This theophany preceded the angelic messenger sent to enlighten Daniel.

In the vision of Daniel 10 (v13) Michael is described as "one of the chief princes." This agrees with the New Testament terminology in Jude 9 where Michael is described as an "archangel" (*ajcaggel ov*):

But Michael the archangel, when he disputed with the devil and argued about the body of Moses, did not dare pronounce against him a railing judgment, but said, "The Lord rebuke you."

The term, "archangel," means "primary angel," or "first-rank angel" or, "ruling angel." This we conclude because the term is formed from the Greek work, *arche* (*ajrch*), meaning "first," or "ruler" when applied to individuals; and *angelos*, (*aggel ov*), meaning, "messenger"² (the Greek term used in Scripture for the heavenly messengers that God dispatches to earth). The term, "archangel," corresponds to the *archai*, the "rulers" of Ephesians 6:12, which describes the highest rank in Satan's hierarchy (see above).

Revelation 12:7, pictures Michael in this role as leading the angelic army of God against the dragon and his angels:

And there was war in heaven, Michael and his angels waging war with the dragon. And the dragon and his angels waged war,

Paul wrote to the Thessalonians, that an archangel would put forth a loud shout, as Jesus and his host descend from heaven in the second coming:

For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first. (1 Thessalonians 4:16)³

Another angel, Gabriel, was involved with Daniel. This angel is mentioned four times in Scripture. He was sent to Daniel on two occasions:

And I heard the voice of a man between the banks of Ulai, and he called out and said, "Gabriel, give this man an understanding of the vision." Daniel 8:16

while I was still speaking in prayer, then the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision previously, came to me in my extreme weariness about the time of the evening offering. Daniel 9:21

In the New Testament, we learn that Gabriel is the angel who was sent to Zechariah, to tell him that he and his wife will have a son (John the Baptist).

² Etymology is an uncertain means of precisely defining words. Care must be exercised in using this technique. In this case, it is justified, since there is no inductive means of defining the term, *archangel*.

³ Since the archangel of 1 Thessalonians 4:16 is called "the" archangel, and since Michael is the only archangel named in Scripture, some exegetes consider Michael to be the archangel mentioned in this passage. However, the evidence is inconclusive since Michael is described in Daniel 10: 13 as, "one" of the chief princes. Michael clearly is a member of the first rank of heavenly beings in God's service. He may be the only one of that rank.

And the angel answered and said to him, "I am Gabriel, who stands in the presence of God; and I have been sent to speak to you, and to bring you this good news. (Luke 1:19)

Six months later, Gabriel was sent to Mary to announce that she will be impregnated by the Holy Spirit and that she would bring forth a son, who is to be named, Jesus.

Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city in Galilee, called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the descendants of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. And coming in, he said to her, "Hail, favored one! The Lord is with you." And the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary; for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb, and bear a son, and you shall name Him Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David; and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever; and His kingdom will have no end. The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; and for that reason the holy offspring shall be called the Son of God. And the angel departed from her. (Luke 1:26-28, 30-33, 35-37, 38b)

Thus, we conclude that Gabriel is a special messenger from God, sent to bring important revelation in special circumstances.

Since Gabriel is the messenger sent to Daniel on two earlier occasions, some exegetes conclude that Gabriel probably was the unnamed messenger in Daniel 10.

In this glimpse into the unseen Kingdom of God, there is a clear picture of a hierarchy of angels. Those on the higher levels of this hierarchy have more authority than those on the lower levels.

The Daniel 10 glimpse into the Satanic hierarchy is consistent with Paul's Ephesians 6 description of this evil empire.

Then he said to me, "Do not be afraid, Daniel, for from the first day that you set your heart on understanding this and on humbling yourself before your God, your words were heard, and I have come in response to your words. But the prince of the kingdom of Persia was withstanding me for twenty-one days; then behold, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, for I had been left there with the kings of Persia. (Daniel 10:12-13)

The Satanic representative in the Persian Empire is called, "the prince of Persia." He was Satan's commandant who oversaw the demons (**daimonion**), who were represented by the idols of Persia (I Corinthians 10:20f). He also was the "ruler" or "authority" that influenced the kings of Persia, in an effort to turn them against the Jews.

The Prince of Persia was a powerful angelic majesty (Jude 8), possibly a level or two higher in the spiritual hierarchy than the messenger sent to Daniel (a Captain in one army's

trying to have authority over a General in another army; more will be said on this topic later).

Michael (*who is as God*), therefore, was sent to unseat the Satan's angelic majesty. He dislodged Satan's Prince of Persia and God's messenger to Daniel was able to complete his mission. The position of influence that the Satan's agent had occupied was to be filled by the angel speaking to Daniel (v 13 "I had been left there with the kings of Persia"). The messenger told Daniel that he was going to return to the ongoing conflict and that his next challenger would be Satan's agent assigned to the Greeks. Michael, Israel's guardian angel, was the only one who was standing with him in this continuing conflict. Earlier, this messenger had helped Michael in a battle with the evil spiritual forces related to Darius the Mede (10:21-11:1)

However, I will tell you what is inscribed in the writing of truth. Yet there is no one who stands firmly with me against these forces except Michael your prince. And in the first year of Darius the Mede, I arose to be an encouragement and a protection for him.

PART THREE: THE BAALIM

The ancients understood that there are spiritual dominions over various people and geographical areas. They called these dominions, the *baalim*. The term, *baalim* (rendered in most English versions as, "baals") means, "Lords." The ancients believed that there was a *baal* over every plot of ground and a hierarchy of *baalim* over enlarged sections of real estate. For this reason, each peasant had an idol to which he sacrificed, representing the *baal* over his garden plot. This was one of the problems that Jehovah had with the Israelites when they came into the Promised Land. The Israelites tried to "copper the bet." Not only did they worship Jehovah, but they also offered sacrifices to the *baalim* of the land that they farmed, just in case Jehovah was not strong enough or not disposed toward the provision of a good crop. Gideon's destruction of his father's *baalim* is a case in point. Another interesting illustration of this truth is the manner in which the Arameans explained their defeat by Israel:

Now the servants of the king of Aram said to him, "Their gods are gods of the mountains, therefore they were stronger than we; but rather let us fight against them in the plain, and surely we shall be stronger than they. (I Kings 20:23)

Every glimpse that the Bible gives us into these realms confirms that there are Satanic hierarchies over nations, people, and cities.

PART FOUR: THE FOOTSOLDIERS

On a totally different level than these Satanic super-powers are the foot-soldiers of the Satanic host, the demons, as noted earlier. During the ministry of Jesus and the life of the early Church, demons were in direct conflict with the messengers of the Gospel. Abundant testimony from around the world makes it clear that demonic activity has not ceased. Jesus has given His Church authority over demons. He first gave this authority to the Twelve and then to the Seventy, when he sent them out on evangelistic missions.

And He summoned the twelve and began to send them out in pairs; and He was giving them authority over the unclean spirits; (Mark 6:7; see also Matt. 10:5ff; Luke 9:1ff)

Now after this the Lord appointed seventy others, and sent them two and two ahead of Him to every city and place where He Himself was going to come....And the seventy returned with joy, saying, "Lord, even the demons are subject to us in Your name." (Luke 10:1, 17)

The concluding verses of Mark's Gospel contain Jesus' promise that the early church would cast out demons:

And these signs will accompany those who have believed: in My name they will cast out demons, they will speak with new tongues; (Mark 16:17)

After the ascension of Jesus, the preachers that went forth fulfilled this prophecy. For example, in Philippi, Paul encountered a demon possessed maiden:

And it happened that as we were going to the place of prayer, a certain slave-girl having a spirit of divination met us, who was bringing her masters much profit by fortunetelling. Following after Paul and us, she kept crying out, saying, "These men are bond-servants of the Most High God, who are proclaiming to you the way of salvation." And she continued doing this for many days. But Paul was greatly annoyed, and turned and said to the spirit, "I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her!" And it came out at that very moment. (Acts 16:16-18)

PART FIVE: THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DIFFERENT LEVELS OF THE HEIRARCHIES

As we have seen, there are hierarchies, levels of authority, both in God's spiritual kingdom and in Satan's spiritual army. There is an absolute quality in these heirarchies. Unless an agent in one kingdom is equal or superior to an agent in the opposing heirarchy, he does not rebuke him, and is seemingly unable to defeat him.

Jude speaks to this issue:

Yet in the same manner these men, also by dreaming, defile the flesh, and reject authority, and revile angelic majesties. But Michael the archangel, when he disputed with the devil and argued about the body of Moses, did not dare pronounce against him a railing judgment, but said, "The Lord rebuke you." But these men revile the things which they do not understand; and the things which they know by instinct, like unreasoning animals, by these things they are destroyed. Woe to them! For they have gone the way of Cain, and for pay they have rushed headlong into the error of Balaam, and perished in the rebellion of Korah. (Jude 8-11)

Note that Jude is speaking, here, of those in the Church who have "crept in unnoticed," people who are perverting Christianity. The reference to the "rebellion of Korah"

indicates that they do not respect spiritual authority (see Numbers 16). One of their characteristics is that they "revile angelic majesties." The angelic majesties include both the hierarchy of God and the hierarchy of Satan. Jude points out that even the archangel Michael (the archangel "who is as God") did not dare pronounce a railing judgment against Satan. He here is illustrating the proper behavior toward someone higher in the hierarchy than the righteous speaker. Michael's behavior is contrasted with those in the church who "revile angelic majesties." They revile things that they do not understand.

SECTION TWO: THE BELIEVER'S ROLE IN SPIRITUAL WARFARE

PART ONE: "BE PREPARED"

What is the Christian to do about these forces of evil? What is our role in this battle between the Kingdoms? Obviously, if we are to be warriors in this war, we must be equipped. We must be certain, before entering the fray, that we have on the protective armor described in Ephesians 6.

Finally, be strong in the Lord, and in the strength of His might. Put on the full armor of God, that you may be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil... Therefore, take up the full armor of God, that you may be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm. Stand firm therefore, having girded your loins with truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace in addition to all, taking up the shield of faith with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming missiles of the evil one. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. (Ephesians 6:10-11, 13-17)

Notice that this armor is not provided for the taking of territory. All seven items in this armor are instruments that enable the believer to hold his ground:

v11 *Put on the full armor of God, that you may be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil.*

V13 *Therefore, take up the full armor of God, that you may be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm.*

V14a *Stand firm therefore...*

Interestingly, even the Word of God, the Sword of the Spirit, is presented here as an instrument for holding one's ground, not the taking of territory. Much has been made of the word, *rhema* (ῥῆμα).

In many quarters, this word has come to signify a special word that God gives to someone for a particular situation, whereas *logos* (λογος), according to this view, refers to written Scripture. This view is too simplistic. *Rhema* usually has the idea of something communicated. For example, in Matthew 4:4, the word is used for, "teaching" ("The Lord's teachings [*rhema*] which were expressed in the form of parables"). The Greeks used the term to indicate something that was spoken, something written, a phrase or passage in literature or a speech, etc. *Logos* (λογος), on the other hand, has the idea of a "word," an "idea," or a "thing." However, in Luke 1:37, *rhema* is used for "thing" ("Nothing [*rhema*] will be impossible with God"). Indeed, *rhema* and *logos* sometimes are used as synonyms. Therefore, we must note the context to determine what meaning

is communicated by the terms. Since the context of Ephesians 6:10-17 has to do with the individual believer's survival in the midst of Satan's maneuvers (temptation, discouragement, etc), *rhema* in this passage would refer to something along the lines of Psalm 119:11, 105:

Thy word I have treasured in my heart, That I may not sin against Thee... Thy word is a lamp to my feet, And a light to my path.

The use of *rhema* in Ephesians 6:17 would indicate that Scripture must be more than just something written by God. It must be heard, accessed, and followed by the believer; it must be a Living Word.

The armor in this passage refers to the believer's relationship with God. Each one must make certain that there is no place in his life for Satan to gain a foothold. Fasting, prayer, meditation on the word, an honest examination of one's heart before God, these and other spiritual disciplines are valuable means of insuring that the armor is in place.

PART TWO: TAKING THE BATTLE TO THE ENEMY

It is not until verse 19 that Ephesians 6 mentions offensive activity:

With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints, and pray on my behalf, that utterance may be given to me in the opening of my mouth, to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in proclaiming it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak. (Ephesians 6:18-20)

Verse 18 speaks of praying for other saints (survival), then in verses 19-20 Paul speaks of offensive activity. The primary weapon used against Satan's kingdom is preaching of the Gospel. Paul calls the Ephesians to join him in the battle by praying for bold proclamation of the Gospel.

Note that Paul does not ask them to "bind" spirits over the cities and nations where Paul will preach. They are to pray that God will give Paul the words to say (*pray...that utterance may be given to me in the opening in my mouth*) and that he will be as bold as he should be (*that in proclaiming it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak*). If the work is that important, and if the enemy is so strong, surely Paul asked them to do what needed to be done to win the battle.

Clearly, proclamation of the Gospel is the means whereby individuals are called out of darkness into light. It is through the deliverance of individuals, that societies are changed:⁴

For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. (Romans 1:16)

⁴ One of the problems that has arisen in the last decade is the manner in which the Dominion Theology has permeated much of the Evangelical community. Dominion Theology is Post-millennial (i.e., that the church will make change society and that Jesus will return to societies that have been made righteous, or where He will be welcomed, as Lord). Some have begun to focus on making Jesus Lord over this city or that city, focusing on societal morals, etc., rather than proclaiming the Word of God, to the saving of individuals.

This reflects what Jesus urged on His disciples:

And He was saying to them, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest. (Luke 10:2)

And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation. He who has believed and has been baptized shall be saved; but he who has disbelieved shall be condemned. (Mark 16:15-16)

Paul gave the same exhortation to the Colossians that he had given to the Ephesians. His part was to preach the Gospel. They could join him in this by praying to God, that He would open the way for Paul to Preach.

... praying at the same time for us as well, that God may open up to us a door for the word, so that we may speak forth the mystery of Christ, for which I have also been imprisoned; (Colossians 4:3)

Once again, the instruction is to pray. Every time any activity other than preaching is urged, it always is prayer to God, not "binding" some demonic hierarchy or power over any territory.

Even though Daniel's experience was before the glorification of Jesus, there is truth for us in Daniel's record. When Daniel interceded, he was praying to God. There was a demonic power over Babylon. In response to Daniel's prayer, a more powerful angel was sent to dislodge the Satanic prince.

Bill Gothard has commented, "Whether a problem comes from God or Satan, we deal, ultimately, with a Sovereign God." This is in keeping with Ephesians 1:20-22a.

...which He brought about in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age, but also in the one to come. And He put all things in subjection under His feet.

Thus, if we are dealing with a Satanic force in the heavenlies, the biblical model is to pray to God to send a mighty angel to enforce the truth expressed in the passage above. There is no example in the Bible of "prayer marches" in which the hierarchies are addressed and driven out by the "authority of the believer."

There is nothing wrong with seeking to identify "territorial spirits," but such is not the concern of Christians in the New Testament. They did not need to identify these spirits. They prayed to God, trusted Him, and preached the Gospel. They did not focus on the enemy.

Encountering a demon-possessed individual is another matter. The believer, in the Name of Jesus, has the authority to cast out the demon. Neither Jesus nor any of His disciples

"bound" demons. The passage from which this practice has arisen has been often misunderstood.

But if I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you. "Or how can anyone enter the strong man's house and carry off his property, unless he first binds the strong man? And then he will plunder his house. (Matthew 12:28-29; see also Mark 3:24ff)

This statement of Jesus is in response to his enemies' claiming that He cast out demons by the power of Satan. He said that before he could take over people's lives, the demons who possessed them had to be removed. He illustrated this by saying that you had to get a homeowner out of the way before you could plunder his house. How did Jesus get the demon who lived in a person out of the way? Not by "binding" Satan. He cast out the demon. It is a far stretch to take this illustrative statement of Jesus as authority for "binding demonic principalities" over cities, etc. (see Addenda A)

PART THREE: THE MINISTRY OF INTERCESSION

First of all, then, I urge that entreaties and prayers, petitions and thanksgivings, be made on behalf of all men, (1 Timothy 2:1)⁵

In this exhortation, Paul uses the four terms commonly employed for prayer:

- **Desiv** (*desis*), referring to supplications made in special crisis
- **Proseuch** (*proseuche*), referring to prayers, in general
- **Ejnteuxiv** (*enteuksis*), referring to intercessory prayer
- **Eujaristia** (*eucharistia*), referring to gratitude and expressions of thanksgiving

It is the third of these terms, **ejnteuxiv**, that is the object of our discussion. One common use of this term is to describe a meeting between two people, for the purpose of negotiation. It also is the term used for a formal petition made to a king or other ruling official. Thus, it becomes the term for intercessory prayer.⁶

In intercession, we are coming before God with a petition, a pleading, in behalf of someone else. Although the term is not used, the following descriptions of prayer describe intercession in the New Testament:

⁵ In this verse, Paul begins the subject matter of the letter. This is a resumption of the thought in 1:18a, which he interrupted with the parenthetical thoughts of 1:18b-20. So, this is the beginning of the "command I entrust to you, Timothy."

⁶This is the noun form of the verb, **ejntugcaiw**. The verb is used five times in the New Testament. Twice it is used in the sense of approaching someone with a complaint (Acts 25:24; Romans 11:2). The other three times (Romans 8:27, 34; Hebrews 7:25) refers to the intercessory activity of the Holy Spirit and of Jesus, our High Priest. The noun, **ejnteuxiv**, is used only twice in the New Testament, both times in I Timothy (2:1; 4:4). For an excellent discussion of these terms, see, Gerhard Kittel, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, Volume VIII, pages 242-245.

Epaphras, who is one of your number, a bondservant of Jesus Christ, sends you his greetings, always laboring earnestly for you in his prayers, that you may stand perfect and fully assured in all the will of God. (Colossians 4:12)

Now I urge you, brethren, by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the love of the Spirit, to strive together with me in your prayers to God for me, (Romans 15:30)

Indeed, we had the sentence of death within ourselves in order that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God who raises the dead; who delivered us from so great a peril of death, and will deliver us, He on whom we have set our hope. And He will yet deliver us, you also joining in helping us through your prayers, that thanks may be given by many persons on our behalf for the favor bestowed upon us through the prayers of many. (II Corinthians 1:9-11)

The terms used in the Colossians and Romans passages, cited above, convey the idea of striving in an athletic contest, intense battle, or straining every nerve in some intense activity. Thus, this is an intense sort of prayer. Fasting may be a part of this striving.

The term in II Corinthians carries the idea of cooperation. Paul is saying, "you are cooperating (or working with us) with us through your petitions."

This is the sense of intercessory prayer. The intercessor enters into the life, even identifies with the life, of the one for whom he is praying, with intensity.

There are some wonderful examples of intercession in Scripture. Two of the greatest intercessors were Moses and Paul. First, note Moses' intercession:

"But now, if Thou wilt, forgive their sin-- and if not, please blot me out from Thy book which Thou hast written!" (Exodus 32:32)

Paul expresses a similar spirit in his plea for Israel:

I am telling the truth in Christ, I am not lying, my conscience bearing me witness in the Holy Spirit, that I have great sorrow and unceasing grief in my heart. For I could wish that I myself were accursed, separated from Christ for the sake of my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh, (Romans 9:1-3)

This sort of commitment to the one for whom the intercession is taking place is the heart of a true intercessor. Note that Paul uses the *voluntative imperfect tense*, which implies, "if I could, I would." God will not allow the intercessor to do so, but the intercessor's heart is such that if he could, he would remove the burden from the one for whom he is interceding and take it on himself. For example, if interceding for someone who has cancer, the intercessor would be willing to take the cancer on himself, if that would remove it from the one for whom he is praying.

Another example of intercession would be Abraham's intercession for Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis 18:22-33) in which Abraham deigned to "negotiate" with God.

Of course, the greatest intercession is that which is being done by the Holy Spirit and Our Lord Jesus Christ, for believers, both individually and corporately (Romans 8:27, 34; Hebrews 7:25).

CONCLUSION

First, the conclusion concerning the hierarchies in the heavenlies:

- Both God and Satan have heavenly hierarchies.
- Satan assigns powerful warlords over certain geographical areas and certain people groups.
- God assigns powerful angels as "guardians" of people groups and individuals.
- Those who are on one level of an hierarchy, do not succeed in opposing, an enemy agent who is at a higher level in the hierarchy.
- Out of reverence for spiritual authority, an agent of one kingdom does not rebuke an agent of another kingdom who is on a higher plane of authority.
- The "foot-soldiers" of Satan's kingdom are the demons, who seek to inhabit people and use people.

Next, we note conclusions concerning the biblical pattern of warfare and intercession:

- The believer must be prepared for battle, by making certain that he has put on the full armor provided for him, through the cross of Christ, the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit, and Holy Scripture.
- Preaching of the Gospel is the chief means of winning the battle against forces of darkness.
- If we encounter a demon, and the Holy Spirit motivates us to do so, we cast out the demon, in the Name of Jesus.
- If we are praying for a situation and there seems to be a heavenly authority (world ruler of the darkness) opposing us, we do not address that entity, but cry out to God to send strong angels to war for us - as was done for Daniel.
- Intercessory prayer, in which one identifies with the one for whom he is interceding, to the degree that there is great intensity and passion, is an effective means of defeating spiritual forces and advancing the Kingdom of God.

ADDENDA: BINDING AND LOOSING

I. GENERAL COMMENTS

- The terms, "binding and loosing," are used to refer to two different specific actions in the New Testament. Most often, when these two terms are used together, they refer to some aspect of a person's relationship to the Kingdom of God. The expression, "binding," never is used in the sense of, "binding Satan," in the manner that the expression is used in many Charismatic circles. The terminology of, "loosing," however, is used in the sense of loosing someone from a Satan-imposed bondage. One example of such terminology is in Luke 13:10-16:

*And he was teaching in one of the synagogues on the Sabbath. 11 And, behold, there was a woman which had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and was bowed together, and could in no wise lift up herself. 12 And when Jesus saw her, he called her to him, and said unto her, Woman, thou art **loosed** from thine infirmity. 13 And he laid his hands on her: and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God. 14 And the ruler of the synagogue answered with indignation, because that Jesus had healed on the Sabbath day, and said unto the people, There are six days in which men ought to work: in them therefore come and be healed, and not on the Sabbath day. 15 The Lord then answered him, and said, Thou hypocrite, doth not each one of you on the Sabbath loose his ox or his ass from the stall, and lead him away to watering? 16 And ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom **Satan hath bound**, lo, these eighteen years, be **loosed** from this bond on the Sabbath day? (KJV)*

- The idea of "binding and loosing" Satan comes from Jesus' comments in defense of his action in casting out a demon (or demons) from a man who was blind and dumb. Here is the record:

Then there was brought to Him a demon-possessed man who was blind and dumb, and He healed him, so that the dumb man spoke and saw. And all the multitudes were amazed, and began to say, 'This man cannot be the Son of David, can he?' But when the Pharisees heard it, they said, 'This man casts out demons only by Bezebul the ruler of the demons.'

And knowing their thoughts He said to them, 'Any kingdom divided against itself is laid waste; and any city or house divided against itself shall not stand. And if Satan casts out Satan, he is divided against himself; how then shall his kingdom stand? And if I by Bezebul cast out demons, by whom do your sons cast them out? Consequently they shall be your judges. But if I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you. Or how can anyone enter the strong man's house and carry off his property, unless he first binds the strong man? And then he will plunder his house.'" (Matthew 12:22-29 NAS)

Because Jesus used the figure of binding a man to explain why it was necessary to cast out demons, a frequently heard expression in deliverance ministry is, "Satan, I bind you!" The concept conveyed by those who use this expression in spiritual warfare is, "Satan, I tie you up so you

cannot do anything here." Such an act is unknown in the New Testament. Demons were *cast out*, they were not *bound*.

In the statements before us (Matthew 12:22-29), Our Lord is defending His casting out of demons by the power of God. He declares that in order for God to take over the life of a person, any demons in that person's life must be removed. Jesus illustrated this by referring to robbers who entered a house to plunder it. Robbers cannot plunder the house until the home-owner is gotten out of the way. This usually was accomplished by tying up the home-owner, then robbing the house. The point is not that the home-owner was bound, but that he was removed from interfering with the robbery. This is what Jesus did every time He cast out a demon (or demons). He removed the demons so that He could take possession of the soul that had been freed from demonic ownership. Our Lord never "bound" a demon. He drove them out of their former habitation.

- The modern practice of "binding and loosing Satan" is the result of building doctrine on an illustration. Illustration cannot be the source of sound doctrine. Instead, doctrine should be built on precepts and consistent examples. Illustrations only make doctrine clear to us. As stated above Jesus and the Apostles never "bound" Satan or a demon. They cast them out. Following their example, we must have the faith and courage to do the same. Of course, it is a lot easier to say, "Satan, I bind you," than it is to say, "In the Name of Jesus, I command you to leave!" If a demon is commanded to leave, the evidence of his departure usually is clear. If Our Master tells us to cast out a demon, we have the authority to do that. No demon can stand against that authority. We need to drop the cowardly language of binding and become bold in casting out.

II. BINDING AND LOOSING WITH REFERENCE TO THE KINGDOM OF GOD

As stated above, the terminology, "binding and loosing," is used most often in the context of our relationship with the Kingdom of God. Sometimes, the binding and loosing is achieved by bringing the word that delivers from sin. The terminology also refers it to church discipline.

A. Peter's Role in Binding and Loosing

Blessed are you, Simon Barjona, because flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but My Father who is in heaven. And I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not overpower it. I will give to you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. (Matthew 16:17-19)

The subject of this passage is the Church and Peter's role in the founding of it. To him were given the "keys of the kingdom of heaven." He was going to be the one to open the gates of heaven to men. This was done, first, on the Day of Pentecost, as he opened heaven to the Jews (Acts 2). It was done a second time in Samaria, as he opened the gates of heaven to the half-breed Jews (Acts 8). It was done a third time as he opened the gates of heaven to Gentiles (Acts 10).

To Peter was given the privilege and responsibility of bringing all races into a binding relationship with the Kingdom. This was done through the preaching of the Gospel and the sovereign bestowal of the Holy Spirit. Each time the Gospel is preached, there usually are two

responses. Some accept the word and are bound in a Kingdom relationship; some reject and are not so bound.

There is no mention of binding and loosing demons in this passage.

B. Binding and Loosing with Respect to a Recalcitrant Sinner

An understanding of "loosing" is clearer in the second instance of the use of these terms. The subject is reconciliation between dissenting brothers.

And if your brother sins, go and reprove him in private; if he listens to you, you have won your brother. But if he does not listen to you, take one or two more with you, so that by the mouth of two or three witnesses every fact may be confirmed. And if he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax-gatherer. Truly I say to you, whatever you shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." (Matthew 18:15-18)

Here the gathered church functions as a court, judging between two brothers who are at odds with one another. When the church pronounces judgment, its decision is binding (This assumes that the pronouncement is in harmony with God's revelation. There are times when carnal church authorities have made pronouncements which have not reflected the heart of God. In these instances, the leaders fit the description of the pharisaical hypocrites of Matthew 23). This reflects the rabbinical practice of binding certain matters upon synagogues. In the rabbinical literature, one finds expressions such as, "Rabbi X binds....." and "Rabbi C looses....." So, when the disputing brothers come before the church, the church hears them out and pronounces a decision. This decision is binding upon the brothers. If a brother does not heed the judgment, he is to be excommunicated.

C. The Apostles' Role in Retaining and Remitting

A third instance in which similar, if not identical, terminology is used occurred on the night the resurrected Lord appeared to the eleven apostles. Here is the record:

Jesus therefore said to them again, 'Peace be with you; as the Father has sent Me, I also send you.' And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and said to them, 'Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, their sins have been forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they have been retained. (John 20:21-23)

Our Lord here referred to the general ministry of the apostles. Certainly their ministry of preaching the Gospel is covered by this statement, because it is in response to our rejection of the Gospel that sins are removed or retained. Jesus' words also reflect the statement recorded in Matthew 18.

Roman Catholicism has taken these three passages (Matthew 16; Matthew 18; John 20) to mean that the Church (which they identify as the Roman Catholic Church, under the covering of the Pope) has the power to forgive sin or to retain sin. The system of confession, penance, the Mass, etc. is

erected upon this foundation. The consistent witness of Scripture, however, is that such forgiveness or condemnation is dependent on how one responds to the Gospel.

III. WHAT ABOUT THE "AUTHORITY OF THE BELIEVER"?

In recent years, some Christians have taken these verses to mean that they can go about binding and loosing things and that heaven has to honor their action. Often, such teachers speak of this as the "authority of the believer." Thus, heaven becomes the servant of the believer.

This view misses the sense of the Greek terms employed. In each of these passages the Greek is in the periphrastic future perfect tense, passive voice. A near literal translation of each of these passages would contain the thought, "already has been" (Note- most interlinear Bibles bring out this sense of the Greek in their literal translations).

".....shall already have been bound.....shall already have been loosed."

".....shall already have been forgiven.....shall already have been retained."

A believer can only bind what God already has decreed as bound. He can loose only what heaven already has decreed as loosed.⁷

For example, if I preach the Gospel and someone accepts it, God already has declared such to be freed from sin. If they reject, God already has declared such to be still in their sin.

If disputing brothers come before the church for arbitration, and one of the brothers refuses to abide by the decision, then heaven already has declared such a one excommunicated. The church is only enforcing what God has already declared.

How a tenant is evicted from a house illustrates the meaning of these Scriptures. A judge issues an eviction notice. The sheriff goes to the house and physically removes the tenant. The sheriff has no authority to remove the tenant unless the judge has issued an eviction notice.

As the slave of Christ, I cannot bind anything or loose anything that My Master has not decreed already bound or loosed. I only have authority in the situation if the Lord has made legal pronouncement upon it. Such pronouncements usually are contained in Scripture. Sometimes, of course, God gives special revelation for specific situations.

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⁷ Some would argue that the two verses that follow Matthew 18:15-18 (verses 19-20) refer to the authority that believers have to speak forth things that heaven has to honor. It should be noted that there is not a sense of bold declaration in these verses. Instead, there is a sense of humbly "asking".