

The Dominion of God

The origin of spiritual warfare

“You had the seal of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty. You were in Eden, the garden of God; every precious stone was your covering... You were the anointed cherub who covers, and I placed you there. You were on the holy mountain of God; you walked in the midst of the stones of fire... Your heart was lifted up because of your beauty... I cast you to the ground, I put you before kings that they may see you” (Ezek. 28:12-17).

“How you have fallen from heaven, you who have weakened the nations! But you said in your heart, ‘I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God...’ Nevertheless, you will be thrust down to Sheol, to the recesses of the pit” (Is. 14:12-15).

The spiritual warfare that has been raging on for aeons is not because of us humans! Rather, it involves an ancient conflict between God and His adversary, the devil. This conflict however, did not just begin with the fall of Adam. That is when it was merely transferred onto this creation. During the days of paradise on earth, the former perfect guardian cherub was already present in the form of a snake, already transformed into the animalistic stage by metamorphosis.

Through the fall of Adam, we human beings merely entered into an already existing warfare, yet **we** are never the origin or even the target of this battle. Even the very first verse of the Bible hints to these connections; that is why in the Hebrew it states: “**And the earth BECAME formless and void** (*tohuwabohu* = state of vast devastation/chaos), **and darkness was over the surface of the deep**” (Gen. 1:2).

Christ, all and in all

Satan attacked the honour and sole dominion of God and thereby challenged and declared war against Christ, who previously *had been all and in all*, for: “**visible and invisible, all things have been created THROUGH HIM** (Christ) **and FOR HIM**” (Christ) (Col. 1:16). Since the beginning of spiritual warfare, the main concern God has is the realization of this goal: Christ should again “**fill all in all**” and He himself should again become “**all and in all**” (Eph. 1:22-23¹; Col. 3:11²; 1. Cor. 15:28³).

It is only when we recognise this great and fundamental relationship that we are able to perceive God dealing in the course of the coming era of the history of man in the right

¹: “And He put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him as head over all things in the Church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.”

² “There is no distinction between Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave and freeman, but Christ is all and in all.”

perspective. For this reason it also states: **“For He (Christ) must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet” (1. Cor. 15:25)**. In other words, the Lord will not rest until He has put every atom and molecule, every heavenly and earthly creature, even the entire cosmos back into the fitting relation or position in Christ **(Phil. 2:10-11)**⁴.

It is most important for us to know the eternal purpose and decree of God. We need to know the means by which God puts His enemies under the feet of Christ. In this way we are also introduced to the breathtaking depths of the thoughts and wisdom of God **(Is. 55:8-9)**⁵. That is to say for the one whose name is also “Just” and “True”: **“and in righteousness He judges and wages war” (Rev. 19:11)**. In other words, God does not just blindly do things without reason or purpose! He who could make dust out of His enemies with a single glance, by virtue of His majesty and justice, handles it in a totally different manner. The first time that God announced this intention to His adversary, was right after the fall of man into sin **(Gen. 3:15)**⁶.

“But why does God allow all this suffering in the world to take place anyway?” is the question asked over and over again in a reproachful undertone. Who are we that we would dare to even make such shameless remarks? How on earth could the One who made the heavens and the earth make foolish mistakes? We better tremble and bow our knees in fear before the Almighty and shut our mouth before we end up being presumptuous and judge our Creator! **“Will the faultfinder contend with the Almighty? Let him who reproves God answer it!” (Job 40:2)**

The Lord alone in His wisdom and justice has permitted the evil one and, for that matter, evil to abide for so long. It is not that God in any way approves of evil or has done anything evil Himself **(James 1:13)**⁷, however, for the sake of His great plan, He allows it. He makes every blow the enemy throws our way strike its own face. Until the fullness of justice is attained, every stone the enemy has set rolling must finally roll back on his own head **(Prov. 26:27)**⁸. In the same way, the enemy will fall into every pit that he ever dug **(Prov. 28:10)**⁹ and will also reap *all* the iniquity that he has sown over thousands of years **(Prov. 22:8)**¹⁰. These are eternal and irrefutable laws of the Almighty. Not one word from His mouth will be lost. The special thing about this great war of righteousness is that God is ***not fighting it alone, but rather in Christ***, through his body the Church. In other words, everything will be accomplished and fulfilled through us, His believers! **“Or do you**

³ “When all things are subjected to Him, then the Son Himself also will be subjected to the One who subjected all things to Him, so that God may be all and in all.”

⁴ “...so that at the name of Jesus, every knee will bow, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”

⁵ “For my thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways my ways, declares the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.”

⁶ “And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head and you shall bruise him on the heel.”

⁷ “Let no one say when he is tempted, ‘I am being tempted by God’, for God cannot be tempted by evil, and He Himself does not tempt anyone.”

⁸ “He who digs a pit will fall into it, and he who rolls a stone it will come back on him.”

⁹ “He who leads the upright astray in an evil way will himself fall into his own pit, but the blameless will inherit good.”

¹⁰ “He who sows iniquity will reap vanity, and the rod of his fury will perish.”

not know that the saints will judge the world? – Do you not know that we will judge angels?” (1. Cor. 6:1-4) “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” (Eph. 6:12).

Therefore, we should in no way concentrate on the works of the devil and allow ourselves to be influenced by his declarations. (This does not mean to be disrespectful! **(Jude 8)**¹¹) As soon as we concentrate on the enemy, count on his might and get scared, God allows us to break down before him. **“Do not be dismayed before them or I will dismay you before them (the adversaries)” (Jer. 1:17).**

It is not because the enemy is so strong that so many children of God are living in constant defeat, rather it is due to the fury of God’s wrath! He cannot stand it when we hide from any enemy. That is why God reproaches Israel by calling out:

“Who are you that you are afraid of man who dies, and of the son of man who is made like grass, that you have forgotten the Lord your Maker, who stretched out the heavens and laid the foundations of the earth, that you fear continually all day long because of the fury of the oppressor, as he makes ready to destroy? But where is the fury of the oppressor?” (Is. 51:12-13)

First Law of Warfare

That is why in the mosaic laws of warfare the Lord says *first* of all to Israel: **“When you go out to battle against your enemies and see horses and chariots and people more numerous than you, DO NOT BE AFRAID OF THEM!” (Deut. 20:1)** The highest principle in spiritual warfare is for the very sake of honoring GOD, and not merely honoring with your words but by living a fearless life. We need to recognize in each and every situation that all power lies *entirely* in God’s hands and the enemy cannot take a single hair from our head without an explicit “yes” from the Father. God has commanded us not to be afraid of anything nor be frightened of anyone and to constantly remember that He will not test us beyond that which we are able to bear **(1. Cor. 10:13)**¹²! Terrific things will indeed happen to us and we shall pass through fire and through the waters **(Is. 43:1-2)**¹³, but not one single unplanned coincidence will take place. *God just does not cause accidents!* Neither the cross nor the beheading of John the Baptist, nor the stoning of Stephen or any other martyr was an “accident”.

Beyond all that has been permitted is a deeper divine purpose, which must serve the mutual (!) best of the affected person as well as humanity as a whole **(Rom. 8:28)**¹⁴.

¹¹ “Yet in the same way these men, also by dreaming, defile the flesh, and reject authority, and revile angelic majesties.”

¹² “No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it.”

¹³ “But now thus says the Lord your Creator, O Jacob, and He who formed you O Israel: Do not fear for I have redeemed you I have called you by name; you are Mine! When you pass through the waters I will be with you, and through the rivers they will not overflow you. When you walk through the fire you will not be scorched...”

¹⁴ “And we know that God causes all things to work together for good for those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.”

Therefore only those who live committed to these most holy principles can be taken into the ranks of those fighting for God. God is *for* us, and even all evil is always ruled by His hand. Read through the whole Bible once in the light of the dominion of God and you will be surprised at the endless abundance of His authority. Especially the books about the end-times like Daniel and Revelation are a real manifesto of the absolute dominion of God. Since prehistoric times, God could not be taken by surprise even once by the enemy. It is somewhat like a puppet show; He creates history with the principalities and powers of evil. He holds the strings and controls the hearts of the kings of darkness like channels of water (**Prov. 21:1**)¹⁵. God never has to think about what His next “move” is going to be, when the enemy strikes again, because He has already prepared several “moves” even aeons before the fall of the devil. Nothing can surprise Him or cause Him to lose track for even a split second. Only those who live a life that is firmly rooted in this understanding of truth can become those who fight for God and remain victorious. It is based on the understanding that Jesus was able to willingly surrender Himself to His murderers. He could confidently say to Pilate: **“You would have no authority over me, unless it had been given you from above” (John 19:11)**. He knew that the cross was not an accident on His very important path, but the ordered will of God. Jesus knew about **Is. 53:10** where it is written: **“But the Lord was pleased to crush Him.”** The knowledge that something is of God and done for God raises all that we do to a higher level and even endows us with the power to lay down our lives even unto death.

This is the point where Peter fell. As long as he saw it was the will of God that his life was at stake, he also had the power to die. For Jesus’ sake he called out: **“I will lay down my life for you!” (John 13:37)** When his Lord was unexpectedly arrested and led away, he lost faith in the dominion of God. Therefore he also lost all power and fell into the trap of the enemy. At that point, Peter could not see the divine destined connection between that which was happening right then and **Gen. 3:15**. Namely, God then said to the snake: **“And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head and you shall bruise him on the heel.”**

In other words it looks as if in judgements and the war in righteousness, God will get rid of the devil and the evil out of this cosmos again by the same means that it entered with, namely ***through the human race!*** Not that man in himself really has the ability. In no way is he the least bit capable! However, with God working through mankind, he is indeed able! This is exactly the eternal purpose that is revealed over and over again in the entire Holy Scriptures. But how on earth is God going to fulfil this purpose at all? The Bible simply calls this process “the mystery of God”. Paul, to whom the final state of this mysterious decree of God (also termed household of God) was revealed, constantly refers to it. In his letters, he wrestles in various areas so that all the saints receive a revelation of the knowledge of this mystery (**Col. 4:2-4**)¹⁶. The one most pressing point he untiringly tries to clearly express is the following: **“But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to**

¹⁵ “The king’s heart is like channels of water in the hand of the Lord; He turns it wherever He wishes.”

¹⁶ “Devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with an attitude of thanksgiving; praying at the same time for us as well, so that we may speak forth the mystery of Christ, for which I have also been imprisoned; that I may make it clear in the way I ought to speak.”

shame the things which are strong...” (1. Cor. 1: 27). We usually just read the human dimensions of these lines i.e. the confrontation between the foolish and the wise and between the weak and the strong *human being*. The Apostle however thinks further into **Eph. 6:12**¹⁷ and makes a direct comparison between our human weakness and the demonic powers in the heavenly places. And it is exactly this comparison that corresponds to the entire context of the Holy Scriptures: **“...and He (i.e. the seed of the human being) shall bruise you on the head” (Gen. 3:15).**

How will God fulfil His purpose that he has declared before all the heavenly powers? How can something like this be fulfilled through flesh and blood? For thousands of years, this breathtaking show has been closely followed by uncountable myriads of angels and authorities. This very process is referred to in **Eph. 3:9-10**, where it says: **“...and to bring to light what is the administration of the mystery which for ages has been hidden in God who created all things; so that the manifold mystery of God might be made known THROUGH THE CHURCH to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places”**. Also **2. Cor. 4:6-11**¹⁸/ **12:9**¹⁹ etc. etc.

What is important now is that we take this revelation very seriously and realize that this ultimately has to take place **THROUGH THE CHURCH**. How this great plan is to become a realization is what this book wants to put as much insight on as possible. The first and most astonishing fact is simply that our Lord Jesus does not work out everything as if it were a “solo attempt”. He indeed bruised the enemies’ head at Calvary and thereby basically fulfilled **Gen. 3:15**. In scripture, however, there is a clear difference between this fundamental victory and the total subjection of the enemy. *Certainly the enemy has been defeated, but with that he has not yet been brought to total subjection.* (We experience that daily, don’t we?) That is why the prophetic Psalm speaks to the risen Jesus, the victorious conqueror of death: **“Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet!” (Ps. 110:1)** Hundreds of years later, the letter to the Hebrews uses exactly this quotation again and it is consistently completed this way: **“...but now we do NOT YET see ALL THINGS SUBJECTED to Him” (Heb. 2:8)**. Since His ascension into heaven, our victorious Lord is seated at the right hand of God. Will the great Father in heaven just snap His fingers whenever and cause His enemies to be put under His feet by some mysterious unexplainable means? A second question is raised in this regard as well: *“Where are the feet of Jesus actually? What does the scripture say concerning this?”* *Beloved, if we study the scriptures thoroughly, then we will not be able to deny the fact that we, the believers, are the body of Christ and therefore also His feet! (Eph. 1:22-23)*²⁰

¹⁷ “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.”

¹⁸ “For God who said, ‘light shall shine out of darkness’, is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ. But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, so that the surpassing greatness of the power will be of God and not from ourselves; we are afflicted in every way, but not crushed, perplexed but not despairing; persecuted but not forsaken; struck down but not destroyed; always carrying about in the body the dying of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body. For we who live are constantly being delivered over to death for Jesus’ sake, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh.”

¹⁹ “And He said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness.’”

²⁰ “And He put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him as head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.”

Thus the outstanding subjection of the adversary will only attain its ultimate fulfilment when the enemy is fully humiliated until he is put under our feet! This is the anticipated perfecting and glorifying of Christ.

The main emphasis of the message comes from this perspective: *Every event in time that takes place, no matter how it appears to us, is in one way or another related to this very restoration of the glory of Christ.* Therefore not a single event should be taken out of this context. Whoever does this anyway will fall into confusion and despair. *As a matter of fact, there is neither chance nor unplanned harm; neither arbitrary destiny nor unpredictable misunderstandings.* No good or bad news comes just by chance! Not even lightning is “by chance of nature.” (**Job 28:26-27**²¹; **2. Sam. 22:15**²²). Simply **EVERY** event is, in one way or another, related to Him who is restoring His glory. Even our own decisions and plans are integrated unnoticeably into this great overall plan. (**Prov. 16:1.9**²³/**19:21**²⁴/**20:24**²⁵) For aeons He is in the process of bringing every spirit of rebellion into subjection so that “**in EVERYTHING Christ might have the first place**” (**Col. 1:18**). In every single thing that happens, we deal *solely* with the one who holds the sceptre in His hand – Christ. We ourselves are not engaged in any warfare, neither is the enemy simply engaged in just any warfare; for neither the enemy nor we are autonomous. Concerning us it says: “**Apart from me you can do nothing**” (**John 15:5**) and the enemy has always had to be led by the unyielding reins of God. Therefore in spiritual warfare, it is never questioned who is stronger in the end – God or the devil. This question is really ridiculous since even the devil is just a creature that God gave breath to.

The whole scripture testifies to this fact. How was it during Job’s lifetime? Could Satan just arbitrarily do something evil on earth? No – in all things he was dependant on permission from God (**Job 1-2**)! This dependency of the enemy is our triumph! It has always been the power and wisdom of God that limits his time and sets his boundaries. The devil was a murderer from the very beginning (**John 8:44**)²⁶, however he still cannot kill a single sparrow without the permission of the heavenly Father. “**Yet not one of them (sparrow) will fall to the ground apart from your Father, but the very hairs of your head are ALL numbered**” (**Matt. 10:29**). Which of us helpless children of mankind would still be alive if our Creator did not cover us with His almighty hands? Not a hair, my beloved, falls from our heads without explicit permission from GOD! This knowledge is one of the most important foundations for spiritual warfare. Only *One* is in control! Since this spiritual conflict ever came into existence, only *One* has had the sceptre in His hand and that is God.

²¹ “When He set a limit for the rain and a course for the thunderbolt, then He saw it and declared it; He established it and also searched it out.”

²² “And He sent out arrows and scattered them, lightning and routed them.”

²³ “The plans of the heart belong to man, but the answer of the tongue is from the LORD.”
“The mind of man plans his way, but the LORD directs his steps.”

²⁴ “Many plans are in a man’s heart but the counsel of the LORD will stand.”

²⁵ “Man’s steps are ordained by the LORD, how then can man understand his way?”

²⁶ “You are of your father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth because there is no truth in him.”

David could only conquer because he knew that, even in his defeat, God was in control to the utmost detail. As David was on the run and Shimei cursed and threw dirt at him, he was able to save the sons of Zeruiah from hastily shedding blood by revealing: **“If he curses and if the LORD has told him, ‘Curse David’, then who shall say, ‘Why have you done so?’”** (2 Sam. 16:10).

After long years of torture, when **Joseph** met up with his brothers who had sold him into slavery, was he able to say with full conviction: **“Now, therefore, it was NOT YOU WHO SENT ME HERE, BUT GOD”** (Gen. 45: 8; Ps. 105:17²⁷). How good it is to be able to enter into the end times with such conviction!

Blessed are we if we can call out with **Daniel**: **“For wisdom and power belong to HIM. It is HE who changes the times and the epochs; HE removes kings and establishes kings; HE gives wisdom to wise men and knowledge to men of understanding. It is HE who reveals the profound and hidden things; HE knows what is in the darkness, and the light dwells in HIM!”** (Dan. 2: 20-22)

God does not want us to be shocked anymore when we meet with the fire of adversity, demonic hatred, and threats! ***Every evil that occurs, solely serves the purpose of our purification and improvement.*** Everything should bind us deeper onto Christ and cause us to be totally submitted to the heavenly head and more grounded in faith. Herein is the glory of God and the school of wisdom of heavenly principalities and powers: Namely, God will not permit any meaningless thing to happen to us and not only that, He makes all evil serve as a blessing in fulfilling His wise plan (**Eph. 3:9²⁸**). Therefore don't begin to complain any longer when you are sick, in need, or are suffering. Don't simply wish and pray for afflictions to leave you! Should the Lord be robbed of his glory just because you are inconsiderately quick to reject the evil that HE elaborately designed to serve to His and your best? Did our Lord do it that way during the temptation in the desert (**Matt. 4**)? Was our role model not **perfected** exactly in the same manner **“through suffering”**? (**Heb. 2:10**)

Nevertheless, I do not intend to promote the counterfeit gospel of “passive glorification of suffering” with these claims! After all, we are actually supposed to **“die for the sake of living”** and not to **“live for dying”** (**2. Cor. 4:11**). All suffering without an active expectation of the glorification of God is fruitless suffering. Consider the lack of comfort and resignation with which **Rom. 8:28** (all things work together for the good) is often quoted. Inwardly one has long since “given in” and complains sighing: “Well, I guess this too must also work for the best somehow”. **Rom. 8:28** however is meant to serve as a continuing promise and not just quoted thoughtlessly and faithlessly as a routine. This promise intends to stimulate us to actively work together!

²⁷ “He sent a man before them, Joseph who was sold as a slave.”

²⁸ “and to bring to light what the administration of the mystery which for ages has been hidden in God who created all things.”

I once attended a funeral where the widow of the deceased drew from this divine promise. Standing tall at the grave of her husband, she testified of the power of resurrection and afterwards comforted the guests who were present. She did not just passively surrender to the difficult suffering, but courageously took it upon herself and spread a strong heavenly atmosphere through her energetic faith. Do we also hear the voice of God even “in all evil?” No suffering or disease is meaningless or by chance. It is certainly right to pray against sickness (what other purpose would the gifts of healing etc. serve?) and withstand evil, but by all means, let us first allow the wisdom of God to work in us. First of all our hearts must be filled with energetic faith so that the harm will fulfil its purpose in us as well. Don’t complain anymore about your neighbour when he stands in your way to hinder, torment, or hurt you, for **“the Lord has told him!”** The Lord has told him: “criticise him..., make a long face towards her..., close up towards him..., steal from her..., forget the appointment..., let the dish fall out of your hand..., tell a lie...,” **(1. Kin 22:19-23)**²⁹ etc. etc. Is God able to trust us to such an extent that even in the midst of wrong and great want, the knowledge of Him having absolute control serves as comfort? Are we capable in our distress and in our “valleys of the shadow of death” to say from our hearts: “For *you*, Lord, it’s fine.”? As long as Christ has not yet become all in all – and even more so in issues of evil, we are not yet fit for actual warfare. May the following Bible verses strengthen our hearts and make us steadfast in this, so that there is not any evil occurrence that is not “of the Lord”:

“If a calamity occurs in a city HAS NOT THE LORD DONE IT?” (Amos 3:6)

“I am THE LORD, AND THERE IS NO OTHER –, the One forming light and creating darkness, causing well-being AND CREATING CALAMITY” (Is. 45:6-7).

“Who is there who speaks and it comes to pass, UNLESS THE LORD HAS COMMANDED IT? Is it not from the mouth of the Most High THAT BOTH GOOD AND ILL GO FORTH?” (Lam. 3:37-38).

“But in the day of adversity consider – GOD HAS MADE THE ONE AS WELL AS THE OTHER” (Eccl. 7:14).

(Compare also **1. Chr. 21:1**³⁰ with **2. Sam. 24:1**³¹).

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²⁹ “Micaiah said, ‘Therefore hear the word of the LORD. I saw the LORD sitting on His throne and all the host of heaven standing by Him on His right and on His left. The LORD said, ‘Who will entice Ahab to go up and fall at Ramoth-gilead?’ And one said this while another said that. Then a spirit came forward and stood before the LORD and said ‘I will entice him’. The LORD said to him, ‘How?’ And he said, ‘I will go out and be a deceiving spirit in the mouth of all his prophets.’ Then He said, ‘You are to entice him and also prevail. Go and do so.’ Now therefore, behold the LORD has put a deceiving spirit in the mouth of all these your prophets and the LORD has proclaimed disaster against you.”

³⁰ “Then Satan stood up against Israel and moved David to number Israel.”

³¹ “Now again the anger of the LORD burned against Israel, and it incited David against them to say, “Go number Israel and Judah.”

Dealing With the Superior Force

“Through you we will push back our adversaries; through your name we will trample down those who rise up against us. For I will not trust in my bow, nor will my sword save me. But you have saved us from our adversaries, and you have put to shame those who hate us. In God we have boasted all day long, and we will give thanks to your name forever” (Ps. 44:5-8).

“Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit says the LORD of hosts” (Zech. 4:6b).

“But I will have compassion on the house of Judah and deliver them by the LORD their God, and will not deliver them by bow, sword, battle, horses or horsemen” (Hos. 1:7).

In a dramatic way the Holy Scriptures constantly portray to us the fact that God consistently confronts His chosen ones with some kind of superior enemy force. There is absolutely no difference if it is chosen individuals, chosen tribes, or Israel as a whole chosen nation. Almost every page of the Bible is a manifesto of the fact that God does not only prefer to call the weak and lowliest but, on top of that, confronts them with threatening superior forces as well.

Study the biographies of all the figures in the Bible who were called by God and you will find the confirmation. Just to mention a few of them, I remind you of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Lot, Joseph, Moses, Joshua, Gideon, all the judges and prophets, David, Ezra, Nehemiah, Ruth, Esther and Job.

What is God telling us with this? Does He merely want to encourage us with these stories, just in case we also find ourselves in a similar situation? Beloved, is this not the way we usually handle the Bible? Generally, each one of us truly hopes to be somehow spared and treated as leniently as possible, and still survive the end time mess.

Isn't it right, that in our understanding, all the many witnesses (Greek=martyrs) in the Scriptures just imply that it could be much worse for us? However, when we suddenly find ourselves in life threatening conflicts, we are extremely shocked and wonder why these conflicts should affect us of all people in such a manner. In seeking some comfort, we turn to one of the biblical figures whose companions we have become and then by pulling ourselves up on them, we hope it will be over as soon as possible and for better days to come. May God give us eye salve to escape such “Destiny Faith!” We are touching most holy ground here, brothers and sisters!

With the handing down of the Holy Scriptures, God intended to do much more than just supply us with a few encouraging biographies and stories to strengthen our faith. Of course, all these testimonies encourage us, strengthen our faith and give us daily spiritual nourishment. But more than that, through all these many examples, God wants to make it clear to us, that there is no exception for us if we are truly called.! We must all be confronted over and over again, with superior enemy forces! And this is not just because,

well after all, it is just a part of the Christian life style..., since life has its ups and downs..., or because every ship sooner or later faces a storm.

It is because of a predestined and irrevocable calling, brethren. Oh, if only the Lord would imprint it permanently on our hearts, so that we would once and for all get away from this deceptive hope of a shallow, happy, safe and sound Christian life. **“How can there be peace as long as your mother Jezebel is still alive?”** called out King Jehu to Joram as he came towards him (**2 Kings 9:22**)³². And how can there be peace as long as Satan and his hosts are still freely roaming the earth and the cosmos? Are we really serious about attempting to live peacefully alongside his murderous activities, lying down like dumb dogs on our sofas hoping that during our lifetime we will not be frightened or earnestly confronted with evil? Even if *you* can lie down in such a way and hide – I no longer can!

This is the reason why God has tried to prepare His people for this single goal for ages: They should be able to stand firm against superior forces. Moreover, they should be able to force them to totally surrender and capitulate with ever increasing ease. God’s warriors should be able to deal with superior forces just as naturally as eating their daily bread. There should not be an experience more normal, no condition more natural, no process more logical than for them to be confronted with superior powers which finally have to succumb in the dust before them. However, how obstinately do the people of God resist such a glorious calling: **“They always go astray in their heart, and they did not know my ways” (Heb. 3:10)**. We are not called for the purpose of being run over and trampled on by superior forces! Our calling lies in prevailing and experiencing how *a mountain in front of us becomes level, the giant turns into a worm, and darkness becomes light*. Am I boasting? No, I am just bowing to the eternal purpose of God. We should not measure such revelations by our subjective (personal) experiences as proof of the truth. The fact that it was possible to live a quiet and easy life till now does not imply that it is the way it should be. This shows at best that on the basis of our immaturity, God could not deem us worthy to suffer for His name, to stand in the gap and be tested.

Becoming Perfected for Service in Warfare

Three essential steps mark the way to becoming perfected for the service of war. This means a steadfastness to which even superior powers are obliged to bow their knees. Once again we find this three-part pattern in the **life of the individual** as well as in the **general history of the salvation of mankind**.

1. Before a person was allowed to join the battle lines of God at all, the law of warfare stated that he had to master his own life first. Before he had won the victory over his fears, his possessions and special interests, he was not to be on the battleground of the Lord (**Deut. 20:1-9**).

Parallel in the history of the salvation of mankind this preparation of the individual war vessel took place during the first 2000 years of man's history (from Adam to Abraham). The first stage therefore comprises the battle against one's equals with the help of God.

³² “What peace, so long as the harlotries of your mother Jezebel and her witchcrafts are so many?”

2. The second stage is about the real battle where the weapons clash, the hoofs rally and the horses snort. This battle is fought under the anointing of God and is either against those equally strong or against superior forces. It is fought and won. This is the way in which Abraham, Joshua, David and the heroes fought, as well as many God-fearing kings and Judges of Israel and Judah.

In the history of the salvation of mankind, this second stage of warfare comprises the second 2000 years during the active warfare of the national war vessel Israel. The character of the second stage of war is the clashing of weapons under the anointing of God. The warrior of God is directly engaged in the action and uses the weapon under the anointing of God.

3. The third stage is the one that God actually envisioned right from the very beginning. It is about perfecting the divine art of warfare and strategy: the confrontation between a called one who is weak in himself vs. an **absolutely superior** enemy. Only through this confrontation is the total victory of God attained! From the very beginning, God, with his called ones, solely worked towards this confrontation. The first two stages were to serve as preparatory and growing stages *on a smaller scale* to gain experience with the total supremacy of God. Here in the third stage, however, the weapons do not clash anymore. It is more a confrontation of a single man, for example Elisha, who was confronted with a superior army such as the Arameans and won the victory (**2 Kin. 6:8-23**)! Or the handing over of a starving and exhausted remnant like Judah to the great array of the Assyrian army. Here too, not a single weapon was heard clashing, not even a single arrow was shot (**2 Kin. 19:32**)³³. What would the use of weapons help anyway, considering such a disproportion of power? The proportional difference would be like a helpless infant against a monster snorting with rage – and still the result was one of the greatest victories of God (**Verse 35**)³⁴. When Jesus said that we should become like children, He also meant this relationship of total weakness and dependency. Even in the Psalms it says: **“From the mouths of infants and nursing babes you have established strength** (or you have laid the foundation walls of a fortress – see **1 Tim. 3:15**)³⁵ **because of your adversaries to make the enemy and the revengeful cease”** (Ps. 8:2ff).

The highest level of warfare is to fight with the weapons of faith and these weapons are actually God Himself! That is why it says in **Eph. 6:10: “Finally, be strong in the LORD and in the strength of His might”**. A man of God translated the verse like this: **“Increase in strength in the LORD and in the authoritative exercising of His dominion (rights)”**. He hits the nail right on the head. In **verse 14**³⁶ we are *prophetically* challenged “to stand” and put on the armor of God. Christ Himself is our armor and weapon! He is indeed the personal truth with which we are to be girded: **“I am the truth...”** (**John 14:6**). He Himself is our righteousness, in which we surround ourselves like in a suit of armor: **“Christ Jesus, who became to us**

³³ “Therefore thus says the LORD concerning the king of Assyria, ‘He will not come to this city or shoot an arrow there; and he will not come before it with shield or throw up a siege ramp against it.’”

³⁴ “Then it happened that night that the angel of the LORD went out and struck 185,000 in the camp of the Assyrians; and when men rose early in the morning, behold all of them were dead.”

³⁵ “...but in case I am delayed, I write so that you will know how one ought to conduct himself in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and support of the truth.”

³⁶ “Stand firm therefore, having girded your loins with truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness...”

righteousness...” (1 Cor. 1:30). He Himself is the driving force of *readiness* in us, which we can wear like *combat boots* through faith: **“For God works in us to will...”** (Phil. 2:13).

Wherever we have any need, we should learn to fall back on Him. He is our *shield*: **“He is our help and our shield”** (Ps. 33:20) as well as our *faith*: **“Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith”** (Heb. 12:2).

He Himself is the living word: **“And the Word was God”** (John 1:1-3) which proves to be sharper than a two-edged *sword* when we ask for it and grasp it in faith (Heb. 4:12)³⁷. Without faith however it is impossible to please God! Finally, He Himself is also our helmet of salvation: **“Christ in you, the hope of glory...”** (Col. 1:27b) to name a few of them. So one must faithfully apply this divine armor, which is God Himself in Christ. If we don’t learn the first stage and go on to the second stage of this warfare, then how will we be capable of facing “gigantic superior forces” in the third stage?

The highest level that can be attained in spiritual warfare is where God can call out to us: **“Stand by and see the salvation of the LORD...!”** (Ex. 14:13) This He could say through Moses to Israel as they were pushed into a corner, between the Red Sea and the approaching Egyptian army with its war chariots of iron. And what a deliverance from the hour of death! This is why, as Israel became weak in faith wanting to give up, God later refers to this victorious exodus out of Egypt over and over again. Since the beginning and end of divine things often have a similar course, this (as well as our) deliverance from the hands of the Egyptians pointed towards the end of their (as well as our) path as well. In this same way, God wants to destroy all His opponents. But how can He when we rebel and remain in unbelief? Just as a seed possesses all the potential to become what it should be in its completeness, is the same way God does everything. Just as Jesus came into this world in weakness and **by the grace of God** as a small child “overcame” the great murderer Herod, in the same way at the end of His life, in uttermost extreme weakness He overcame the father of all murderers, Satan.

It was very similar with Moses. He also overcame Pharaoh **by the grace of God** in a double manner, first as an “infant” and then as a weak and broken man. Before the conclusion written in Rev. 12:9-10: **“And the great dragon was thrown down...”** and **“...Now the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of His Christ (body) have come”** in verses 3-6³⁸ scripture again talks about a “male child”, who was caught up to God right in the face of a snarling-red dragon.

Wherever God could lead His righteous and chosen ones into weakness, it resulted in the greatest victories! With nailed feet, God won the greatest victory that has ever been won! There were no clashing of weapons – there was just the *miserable righteous one*, the *superior enemy* and the living and *almighty God*.

³⁷ “For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.”

³⁸ “Then another sign appeared in heaven; and behold a great red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and on his head were seven diadems. And his tail swept away a third of the stars of heaven and threw them on the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman who was about to give birth, so that when she gave birth he might devour the child. And she gave birth to a son, a male child, who is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron; and her child was caught up to God and to His throne. Then the woman fled into the wilderness where she had a place prepared by God, so that there she would be nourished for one thousand two hundred and sixty days.”

In the coming of Jesus seen in the history of the salvation of mankind, the beginning of the third stage of the warrior of God becoming fit to engage in war has started.

Whereas during times of the national war vessel Israel still fought with flesh and blood under the anointing of God, this came to an absolute end with the coming of Jesus. Those few great victories that Israel won merely by “wait and see” was only foreshadowing what is supposed to take place in the last days of perfection. We (that is the New Testament Christians) must be confronted with extremely superior battle forces of darkness just like Elisha.

Even though we also will have to go through the three aforementioned stages of warfare one after the other, we start fighting with spiritual weapons right from the beginning: At first for ourselves (against our flesh), then for our brethren (against the works of the enemy, lies etc.) and conclusively for the perfecting of the kingdom of God on earth (against the personal presence of devilish powers and principalities).

Whom can God train for the last confrontation? Here the sons are required, for whom the whole of creation waits and sighs (**Rom. 8:19**)³⁹. How does one become a “son”? How will the body of Christ be perfected? What is the sign of perfect maturity (**Eph. 4**)?

The distinguishing mark is *strength coming through weakness!* **“My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness” (2 Cor. 12:9)**. The way, therefore, is the way of weakness and confrontation. This weakness has nothing to do with a resignation due to feeling inferior or ungrounded frailty. That’s the reason why Paul, while weakened, could still call out with complete confidence: **“Most gladly therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me” (Verse 9b)**.

Actually, the point is that as we are being confronted with increasing superior forces, we are to receive power streams never known to us and in this way be able to learn to wait upon God. **“Therefore I am well content with weaknesses, with insults, with distresses, with persecutions, with difficulties for Christ’s sake; FOR WHEN I AM WEAK, THEN I AM STRONG” (Verse 10)**.

We have to come to this point! Elisha was not astonished as he was confronted with a global superior force. – When we are confronted we must not be astonished (**2 Kin. 6:16-17**)⁴⁰, because we are to know and *have experienced* that a universal power is on our side; God teaches us to finally pray with determination like Jehoshaphat who was confronted with the superior force of the Ammonites: **“O our God, will you not judge them? For we are powerless before this great multitude who are coming against us; nor do we know what to do, but (this is exactly the point that makes all the difference) our eyes are on You” (2 Chr. 20:12)**.

As long as our eyes are on ourselves or on our circumstances or on the enemy when we encounter evil and we allow these to disrupt us, we are unfit for the actual and final warfare. It is not until all shake-ups and all terror drive us to Christ alone and our eyes are

³⁹ “For the anxious longing of the creation waits eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God.”

⁴⁰ “So he answered, ‘Do not fear, for those who are with us are more than those who are with them.’ Then Elisha prayed and said, ‘O LORD I pray, open his eyes that he may see.’ And the LORD opened the servant’s eyes and he saw; and behold the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha.”

ever more exclusively on Him, that God has arrived at the essential point in us. However, He can only do such a thing in us if we are willing to begin the first stage of being fitted to engage in warfare, and then with a holy determination strive on towards the third stage. Only through practicing subjecting the enemy can we be made strong to increasingly overcome the enemy. It is the same with us as with Joshua and Caleb when they called out to the intimidated people: **“And do not fear the people of the land, FOR THEY WILL BE OUR PREY/BREAD!” (Num. 14:9)** In other words, with every enemy we overcome, we are fed with spiritual bread (i.e. the forming of the Christ in us) so that it makes us stronger, enabling us to overcome the next larger enemy that follows etc. etc.

Before getting to the point where we have learned to **“wait and see”**, we will have gone through great inner struggles, suffering processes and trials of all kinds – yet after we have been strongly shaken, we will in amazement attain up to the reign with Christ **(2 Tim. 2:11-12⁴¹; Heb. 12:26-28⁴²)**. All adversity and evil that comes our way, should only stir up and deepen our yearning for the bodily return of Christ. Every motion and manifestation of evil should cause us to cry out to HIM for the revelation of the sons of God with an even greater fervency. We have to be completely involved in the reality of this spiritual warfare so that in the end we are no longer concerned about ourselves, whether through life or death – if only *Christ, our life*, takes shape in an ever increasing way and we somehow appear at the resurrection (Greek: **EX ANASTASIS**). It is in this way that *death, the devil and sin* are **personally** condemned and thrown out of God’s creation.

“But whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ, more than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ and be found IN HIM – ...that I may know HIM and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death; in order that I may attain to the *resurrection* from the dead. Not that I have already obtained it....” (Phil. 3:7-12).

“...Christ will even now, as always, be exalted in my body, WHETHER BY LIFE OR BY DEATH” (Phil. 1:20).

The fact that these final things can only happen through grace alone is mentioned in **1 Pet. 1:13: “Keep sober in spirit, fix your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.”**

“Your name be hallowed! Your kingdom come! Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven! Do come, Lord Jesus!”

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⁴¹ “For if we died with Him, we will also live with Him, if we endure, we will also reign with Him.”

⁴² “And His voice shook the earth then, but now He has promised, saying, ‘Yet once more I will shake not only the earth but also the heaven’. This expression, ‘Yet once more’, denotes the removing of those things which can be shaken, as of created things, so that those things which cannot be shaken may remain. Therefore, since we receive a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us show gratitude, by which we may offer to God an acceptable service with reverence and awe.”