

## ***What is Spiritual Warfare?***

*(A Response to Strategic Level Spiritual Warfare teaching)*

*Excerpts from the Book*

*“Demons:*

*What the Bible Really Says About the Powers of Darkness”*

*by Dr Michael C. Heiser*

**Norman’s Note:** This paper is a response to the questions we get every time we teach on Body Soul Spirit and the 3 heavens. I believe that the responsible believer should examine the scriptures for him/herself and come to their own conclusion. I found that this book addresses this subject as good as anything else that I have read on the subject.

C Peter Wagner was key figure behind the Strategic Level Spiritual Warfare (SLSW) movement. This approach focuses on fighting demonic forces over cities, regions and countries.

It comprises three levels of warfare:

1. Ground Level (casting demons out of people on earth)
2. Occult Level (dealing with demonic forces within Satanism)
3. Strategic Level (direct confrontation with territorial spirits over cities, nations, neighborhoods, people groups, industries, spiritual alliances)

The Deuteronomy 32 World View gives jurisdiction of these spiritual forces over regions and countries.

**Norman’s Note:** *This World View is the division at Babel which Moses speaks to in verse 8 “When the Most High gave the nation their inheritance, When HE separated the sons of man, He set boundaries of the peoples according to the sons of Israel” Deuteronomy 32:9 This discussion does not lay the foundation of the division of the nations in Genesis 11 but the abbreviated version is that the “sons of men” were heavenly beings that God divided and separated into “nations”. This is the foundation for the NT verses that declare “principalities, powers and rulers”. It is my belief that these beings were angelic and that they fell and created the “nations” that Israel would eventually fight against, and these are the spirits that we find ourselves fighting against today. The spirits of these ancient Nephilim still live in men today and this is the fight we are engaged in.*

Most of the justification for this course of action (SLSW), is found in Old Testament passages such as:

Deuteronomy 32

Psalm 82

Psalm 96:5

Psalm 106:37-38

Daniel 10 (The Prince of Greece and The Prince of Persia)

SLSW involves spiritual mapping and names specific territorial spirits and aggressively attacks these spirits in prayer.

This is NOT the pattern that one sees in the New Testament. The Great Commission is framed around people going out and claiming the “nations” through the Gospel which commands us to “make disciples of all nations” (Matthew 28:19)

The kingdom of darkness will loose what is essentially a spiritual war of attrition. “For the gates of hell will not be able to withstand the Church.” (Matthew 16:18)

This is why believers are never commanded to rebuke these spirits (“sons of men” or Elohim in the Hebrew) and demand their flight in the Name of Jesus.

**Norman’s Note:** *These “Elohim” are different than the demons that we deal with in people. These demon spirits are the spiritual offspring of the Elohim that had sex with women in Genesis 6:2-4. These “giants” or Nephilim died but their spirits live on and look for a body to inhabit in order to carry out their evil assignments on the earth. This topic is explained in detail in Enoch 15:8-12 and was understood as a part of the World View of the early church and second temple Jewish authors. (this is the 600 years during which the Second Temple stood in the city of Jerusalem)*

Spiritual Warfare needs to be understood in the context of the conflict between two kingdoms. During Jesus public ministry He articulated it this way, “if it is by the Spirit of God that I cast out demons, then the Kingdom of God has come upon you”. (Matthew 12:28) It is no coincidence that the expulsion of demons from people and places accompanied the inauguration of the Kingdom of God! As the Kingdom of God grows, the kingdom of darkness shrinks and loses ground.

Jesus never commanded that His followers confront spiritual entities in the heavenly realm. The disciples had power to exercise demons but were limited to healing personal harassment and harm in people. When Jesus gave the 70 power over all the enemy (Luke 10:19) this did not extend to angelic rulers over cities and nations. This is made clear when the 70 exclaim “even the demons submit to us in your name”. (Luke 10:17)

They were ministering to PEOPLE afflicted in various ways by demons and this is what they continued to do after the day of Pentecost. There is no hint that the 70 were casting demons out of villages, cities or temples. INSTEAD, He gave the Great Commission! The demons were driven away, but that doesn’t result in a new person entering the Kingdom of God. It was much more comprehensive and enduring than that! The goal was to bring Eden FULL CIRCLE! Fulfilling God’s desire to have a human family forever! Punishing fallen spirits does not accomplish God’s original Edenic goal. Only The Great Commission accomplishes the ends to which God has been working as well as the defeat and punishment of the rebellious evil spirits. The Great Commission IS THE comprehensive plan for spiritual warfare. Spiritual Warfare is about the furtherance of the Gospel by committed believers, NOT power encounters with spiritual beings.

<sup>10</sup> Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. <sup>11</sup> Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. <sup>12</sup> For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. <sup>13</sup> Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. <sup>14</sup> Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, <sup>15</sup> and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. <sup>16</sup> In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. <sup>17</sup> Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

<sup>18</sup> And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people. <sup>19</sup> Pray also for me, that whenever I speak, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel, <sup>20</sup> for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it fearlessly, as I should.

Ephesians 6:10-20 NIV

Paul nowhere in this passage recommends that believer confront or admonish the supernatural rulers and powers. Here is what Paul considered affective in combating forces of spiritual darkness:

1. Truth
2. Righteousness
3. The Gospel
4. Faith
5. Salvation
6. The Word of God
7. Prayer
8. Perseverance

Instead of power encounters, spiritual warfare in Ephesians 6 is about having persevering faith in the gospel and the Word of God and living a holy and prayerful life as a follower of Jesus. The same strategy is seen in the other popular reference used for power encounters.

<sup>3</sup> For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. <sup>4</sup> The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. <sup>5</sup> We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ. <sup>6</sup> And we will be ready to punish every act of disobedience, once your obedience is complete.

2 Corinthians 10:3-6 NIV

Paul's description of how he fights the strongholds of darkness includes neither exorcism or nor efforts to evict territorial spirits. There is no confrontation of supernatural powers among his personal strategy. Peter and Jude take a stand OPPOSITE of SLSW. They advocate caution with respect to evil spirits. Both writers warn their readers to NOT blaspheme the glorious ones, beings that outrank angels. Even angels do not speak disrespectfully to high-ranking celestial powers. It seems logical to conclude that SLSW crosses this line and is ill advised and contrary to the teaching of Peter and Jude.

**Norman's Note:** *We don't command angels, and we don't command rulers in these high places. This is out of our jurisdiction because our jurisdiction is ON EARTH.*

*'But even the archangel Michael, when he was disputing with the devil about the body of Moses, did not himself dare to condemn him for slander but said, "The Lord rebuke you!"'*  
Jude 1:9 NIV

*'This is especially true of those who follow the corrupt desire of the flesh and despise authority. Bold and arrogant, they are not afraid to heap abuse on celestial beings; yet even angels, although they are stronger and more powerful, do not heap abuse on such beings when bringing judgment on them from the Lord.'*  
2 Peter 2:10-11

Successful spiritual warfare in these passages DESTROYS ARGUMENTS, and lofty opinions raised against the knowledge of God and takes every thought captive to the obedience of Christ. In other words, spiritual warfare is being a faithful disciple who is NOT tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine (Ephesians 4:14)

Spiritual warfare is about leading a life obedient to Jesus and following His obedient example for the cause of God's vision for a kingdom on earth!

Adherence to truth and committed discipleship is what constitutes spiritual warfare in NT theology. **THIS IS A LOT HARDER THAN YELLING COMMANDS INTO THE AIR!**

Demonization comes in the form of FALSE TEACHING, temptation and sinful life patterns.

Being obedient disciples is what makes us fit soldiers for Christ! The job of every Christian is to carry out the Great Commission. This is how the Kingdom of God grows and the kingdom of darkness recedes.