

# The Nature of Our Warfare – Part 1

## Intro

Scripture neither ignores nor gives undue attention to the devil

Story of history (and of Scripture) is about God and His redemptive plan for humanity

- to rescue us from the power of sin

The devil is in the story but not really as a main contender

In the process of working out His plan God destroys the works of satan (1 Jn 3:8),

- who seized on the potential for sin to try and derail God's plans on earth
- The devil is still working to thwart God's redemptive plan.

The devil did not invent sin.

- The potential for sin would exist without him
- tree of the knowledge of good and evil.
- The fact that we have the capacity to choose
  - which means that we can truly love, obey and worship God
  - means that we also have the capacity to sin

How we view the unseen realm and the devil is important

- we must, like Scripture, neither ignore him and his activity, not give undue attention to him

Must never see the devil and His demonic forces as a force pitted against God in the same way two armies would be pitted against each other

- with the chance that either one may,
  - whether it be by force or cunning,
  - triumph over the other

God is sovereignly working out His plan and purpose

- Any role the devil may play is only allowed within the constraints of God's sovereignty and goodness.
- God is in the driver's seat of the vehicle of history and He determines its course
- the devil does not even have his own car to drive

We must especially guard against an occultic view of the way things are

- In this view there is an interaction between the earthly and 'spiritual' realm where both can exert a type of influence on each other
- The idea is that we can control or influence what happens in the 'spiritual' realm because of what we do
- this is what those who follow occultic practices seek to do
- They seek to learn the secret ways to do so.
- I put it to you that whatever influence or 'control' they think they have is really a deception that the devil uses to serve his own ends

As believers, we are under God's authority and exercise that delegated authority in obedience to God.

- We do not have authority to wield outside of our God ordained sphere of influence.
- Jesus indicated that, of much more importance, was the fact that our names are found in the book of life (Lk 10:18–20).

Biblical perspective is that God is the chief (sovereign) influence

- and whatever we accomplish on earth
  - we do so because of who He is
  - and because of what He does both in heaven and earth
- It all begins with God
- and all we can accomplish in His Kingdom is because of Him
- and because of what He has already established in heavenly places

Note: Daniel's experience is a good example. He prayed in response to the prophetic word given to Jeremiah about the 70 years of exile. He was completely unaware of the resistance to the answer God sent by the 'prince of Persia', but he did not need to be aware of it since that was not his battle. His role was to seek God's Kingdom in prayer.

We are not called to do anything in the 'spiritual' realm

We are made for earth

**Earth was made for us and we were made for earth**

We are made for this earth

- until we are glorified and receive a new body that is fit for the next age

We have earth as our God given home

- a new heaven and a new earth as our hope
- seated in heavenly places with Christ now as a foretaste of that hope

We are at the same time

- on the earth by God's desire and design
- and citizens of another Kingdom – sojourners and aliens

While we are here, however, we have work to do – on earth

Earth as the realm in which our commission is carried out

- Earth as the realm in which we work, bear fruit and rule (shepherd) – Gen 1:28
- Earth as the realm in which we preach the gospel – make disciples of all nations
- Earth as the realm where we seek God's Kingdom and His righteousness
  - our prayer (and our work for/with Him)
  - is for His Kingdom come,
  - His will be done,
  - on earth, as it is in heaven.

What this means is that:

- Earth is the realm in which we do battle, persevere in faith and gain an inheritance
- Earth is the realm in which we are called to overcome
  - the world (system) and the 'god' of this world (1 Jn 2:12–14, 1 Jn 5:4–5)

**What realm is satan in?**

Heavenly / spiritual places – but not the same as where Christ is

- See Rev 12 / Lk 10:18-20
- the devil has been cast down to earth and makes war against the saints

A part of our battle is

- against the influence 'spiritual' beings who are against God and His church
- but we do not fight that battle in a 'spiritual' realm

So, we are in a battle zone

- but the purpose of the battle is different from God's perspective than it is from the devil's
- The devil is at enmity with God and all who belong to him.
- He knows that his time is short and that his power is limited
- He is angry
- So, he fights from this perspective of anger and resentment against God

### **The nature of our battle is different**

The nature of our battle is focussed on God's Kingdom coming and His will being done, on earth.

The nature of our warfare is primarily **FOR** the Kingdom and **NOT** against the devil – even though he targets us

We do not wage war according to the flesh – 2 Cor 10:3-4

That battle is not against people (flesh and blood)

- From our perspective, both the flesh (ours) and spiritual beings make war against us – 1 Pet 2:11 / Rev 12
- We also need to resist and overcome the system of the world – to be Kingdom focussed, have a Biblical Christian worldview... - 1 Jn 5:4–5

Our battle is

- For our own victory (to be overcomers as Christ has overcome the world),
- For the victory of the church in fulfilling her calling
- and also for the salvation of others
- to fulfil our commission,
- to ride forth victoriously, with Christ, on behalf of truth, humility and righteousness,
- to proclaim the gospel of the Kingdom of God

### **The schemes of the devil**

We stand against the schemes of the devil

To derail us personally but also in his attempts to derail the church in its calling

His schemes / strategies include:

- Doubt – seeks to undermine our faith in God, to accuse us and have us walk in condemnation, to have us doubt God’s goodness, power and sovereignty. Unbelief derails us in fulfilling our calling and receiving our inheritance – keeps us from being effective in the Kingdom
- Deception – to get us to see God, ourselves, the world we live in and even himself in a way that is not true. To keep us thinking and behaving according to the ways of the world
- Distractions (busyness, cares of the world, our troubles, false causes)
- False doctrine – gets us to follow after pet doctrines, to relate to God in wrong way (e.g. as a ‘sugar daddy), to trust again in the flesh (legalism, techniques, formulas, programmes...)
- Temptation – sin disrupts our fellowship with God (see how Jesus dealt with temptation – Luke 4:1-13, Mt 4:1-11). But remember Jam 1:14 and 4:1

Never need to fear the devil – he is a defeated foe, but we do need to stand against his activity against us and the church (Jn 12:27–32, 1 Jn 4:2-6)

More on this another time...

### **How do we fight – wage warfare – stand?**

We fight both as individuals and as the church

Know God and fellowship with Him

- but the people who know their God shall stand firm and take action – Da 11:32

Put off the old (ways of the flesh) and put on the new created to be like God in all righteousness and holiness – Eph 4:17–24

We do not walk or think as the world does but are renewed in the spirit of our minds – Eph 4:17–24

Give no room to the flesh – do not gratify the desires of the flesh but walk in the Spirit – Gal 5:16

Fight with the right weapons

- Are not waging a physical war with physical weapons
- Are waging a war that calls for the appropriate weapons, and armour
- We have this in Christ and in the power of God that is at work in us

Paul exhorts the church to stand strong in the Lord and in the strength/power of **His** might (Eph 6:10)

- His power is at work in us
- We stand in that – put it all on
- Active, not passive

Put on the **whole** armour of **God**

- All that He has made us to be and has given us in Christ – Eph 6:10-20, Rom 13:11-14, 1 Th 5:8–11.
- Walk in the truth (which is Christ),
- in the righteousness we have in Christ,
- being ready to preach the gospel of peace,
- persevering and maturing in our faith,
- secure in the assurance of salvation,
- able to handle the sword of the Spirit well – which is the Word of God
- and praying at all times in the Spirit

Be aware, be alert – 1 Pet 5:8

Submit to God, in humility, and resist the devil – he will flee – 1 Pet 5:5-11, Jam 4:7

Give no opportunity to the devil – Eph 4:27

We proclaim the gospel of the Kingdom of God.

- Even though the world lies in the power of the evil one
- Greater is he that is in us than he that is in the world – 1 Jn 4:4
- there is far greater power in the gospel to save all those who believe – 2 Co 4:3–6, 1Jn 5:19, Rom 1:16-17

Our greatest ‘weapon’ is the gospel

What empowers us to stand and be effective as the church is the effect of what the gospel has accomplished in us – what we have in Christ

What enables us to see the Kingdom of God come is the gospel

### 1 Jn 3:8

<sup>8</sup>Whoever makes a practice of sinning is of the devil, for the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was **to destroy the works of the devil.**

### Heb 2:14–15

<sup>14</sup>Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things, that **through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil,**  
<sup>15</sup>and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery

### Ge 1:27–28

<sup>27</sup> So God created man in his own image,  
in the image of God he created him;  
male and female he created them.

<sup>28</sup>And God blessed them. And God said to them, **“Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over** the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth.”

### Ge 2:15–17

<sup>15</sup>The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden **to work it and keep it.** <sup>16</sup>And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, “You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, <sup>17</sup>but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.”

### 1 Jn 2:12–14

<sup>12</sup>I am writing to you, little children,  
because your sins are forgiven for his name’s sake.

<sup>13</sup> I am writing to you, fathers,  
because you know him who is from the beginning.

I am writing to you, young men,  
**because you have overcome the evil one.**

I write to you, children,  
because you know the Father.

<sup>14</sup> I write to you, fathers,  
because you know him who is from the beginning.

I write to you, young men,  
because you are strong,  
and the word of God abides in you,  
**and you have overcome the evil one.**

### Lk 10:18–20

<sup>18</sup>And he said to them, **“I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven.** <sup>19</sup>Behold, I have given you authority to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall hurt you. <sup>20</sup>Nevertheless, do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, **but rejoice that your names are written in heaven.”**

### Re 12:7–17

<sup>7</sup> Now war arose in heaven, Michael and his angels fighting against the dragon. And the dragon and his angels fought back, <sup>8</sup> but he was defeated, and there was no longer any place for them in heaven. <sup>9</sup> And the great dragon was thrown down, that ancient serpent, who is called the devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world—**he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him.** <sup>10</sup> And I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, “Now the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of his Christ have come, for the accuser of our brothers has been thrown down, who accuses them day and night before our God. <sup>11</sup> And they have conquered him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, for they loved not their lives even unto death. <sup>12</sup> Therefore, rejoice, O heavens and you who dwell in them! But woe to you, O earth and sea, for the devil has come down to you in great wrath, because he knows that his time is short!”

<sup>13</sup> And when the dragon saw that he had been thrown down to the earth, he pursued the woman who had given birth to the male child. <sup>14</sup> But the woman was given the two wings of the great eagle so that she might fly from the serpent into the wilderness, to the place where she is to be nourished for a time, and times, and half a time. <sup>15</sup> The serpent poured water like a river out of his mouth after the woman, to sweep her away with a flood. <sup>16</sup> But the earth came to the help of the woman, and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed the river that the dragon had poured from his mouth. <sup>17</sup> Then the dragon became furious with the woman and **went off to make war on the rest of her offspring**, on those who keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus. And he stood on the sand of the sea.

### 2 Co 10:2–6

<sup>3</sup> For though we walk in the flesh, **we are not waging war according to the flesh.** <sup>4</sup> For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds. <sup>5</sup> We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ, <sup>6</sup> being ready to punish every disobedience, when your obedience is complete.

### 1 Pe 2:11–12

<sup>11</sup> Beloved, I urge you **as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh**, which wage war against your soul. <sup>12</sup> Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation.

### 1 Jn 5:4–5

<sup>4</sup> For **everyone who has been born of God overcomes the world.** And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith. <sup>5</sup> Who is it that overcomes the world except the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?

### Eph 6:10

<sup>10</sup> Finally, **be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might.**

### Eph 4:10–14

<sup>10</sup> He who descended is the one who also ascended far above all the heavens, that he might fill all things.) <sup>11</sup> And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, <sup>12</sup> to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, <sup>13</sup> until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, <sup>14</sup> so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in **deceitful schemes**.

### Lk 4:1–13

And Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness <sup>2</sup> for forty days, **being tempted by the devil**. And he ate nothing during those days. And when they were ended, he was hungry. <sup>3</sup> The devil said to him, “If you are the Son of God, command this stone to become bread.” <sup>4</sup> And Jesus answered him, “It is written, ‘Man shall not live by bread alone.’” <sup>5</sup> And the devil took him up and showed him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time, <sup>6</sup> and said to him, “To you I will give all this authority and their glory, for it has been delivered to me, and I give it to whom I will. <sup>7</sup> If you, then, will worship me, it will all be yours.” <sup>8</sup> And Jesus answered him, “It is written,

“ ‘You shall worship the Lord your God,  
and him only shall you serve.’ ”

<sup>9</sup> And he took him to Jerusalem and set him on the pinnacle of the temple and said to him, “If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down from here, <sup>10</sup> for it is written,

“ ‘He will command his angels concerning you,  
to guard you,’

<sup>11</sup> and

“ ‘On their hands they will bear you up,  
lest you strike your foot against a stone.’ ”

<sup>12</sup> And Jesus answered him, “It is said, ‘You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.’ ” <sup>13</sup> And when the devil had ended every temptation, he departed from him until an opportune time.

### Jas 1:12–15

<sup>12</sup> Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial, for when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life, which God has promised to those who love him. <sup>13</sup> Let no one say when he is tempted, “I am being tempted by God,” for God cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself tempts no one. <sup>14</sup> **But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire.** <sup>15</sup> Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death.

### Jas 4:1

What causes quarrels and what causes fights among you? Is it not this, that **your passions are at war within you?**

### **Jn 12:27–32**

<sup>27</sup> “Now is my soul troubled. And what shall I say? ‘Father, save me from this hour’? But for this purpose I have come to this hour. <sup>28</sup> Father, glorify your name.” Then a voice came from heaven: “I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again.” <sup>29</sup> The crowd that stood there and heard it said that it had thundered. Others said, “An angel has spoken to him.” <sup>30</sup> Jesus answered, “This voice has come for your sake, not mine. <sup>31</sup> Now is the judgment of this world; **now will the ruler of this world be cast out.** <sup>32</sup> And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself.”

### **1 Jn 4:2–6**

<sup>2</sup> By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, <sup>3</sup> and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you heard was coming and now is in the world already. <sup>4</sup> Little children, **you are from God and have overcome them, for he who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.** <sup>5</sup> They are from the world; therefore they speak from the world, and the world listens to them. <sup>6</sup> We are from God. Whoever knows God listens to us; whoever is not from God does not listen to us. By this we know the Spirit of truth and the spirit of error.

### **1 Pe 5:5–11**

Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for “God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.”

<sup>6</sup> **Humble yourselves**, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you, <sup>7</sup> casting all your **anxieties on him, because he cares for you.** <sup>8</sup> **Be sober-minded; be watchful.** Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. <sup>9</sup> **Resist him, firm in your faith**, knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world. <sup>10</sup> And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you. <sup>11</sup> To him be the dominion forever and ever. Amen.

### **Jas 4:7**

<sup>7</sup> Submit yourselves therefore to God. **Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.**

### **Ro 13:11–14**

<sup>11</sup> Besides this you know the time, that the hour has come for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed. <sup>12</sup> The night is far gone; the day is at hand. **So then let us cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light.** <sup>13</sup> **Let us walk** properly as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and sensuality, not in quarreling and jealousy. <sup>14</sup> But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.

### **Eph 6:10–20**

<sup>10</sup> Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. <sup>11</sup> **Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil.** <sup>12</sup> For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. <sup>13</sup> Therefore take up the

whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm. <sup>14</sup>Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, <sup>15</sup>and, as shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace. <sup>16</sup>In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one; <sup>17</sup>and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, <sup>18</sup>praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end, keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints, <sup>19</sup>and also for me, that words may be given to me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel, <sup>20</sup>for which I am an ambassador in chains, that I may declare it boldly, as I ought to speak.

### 1 Th 5:8–11

<sup>8</sup>But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, having put on the **breastplate of faith and love**, and for a helmet the hope of salvation. <sup>9</sup>For God has not destined us for wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, <sup>10</sup>who died for us so that whether we are awake or asleep we might live with him. <sup>11</sup>Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing.

### Ga 5:16–17

<sup>16</sup>But I say, **walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh.** <sup>17</sup>For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do.

### Eph 4:27

and give no opportunity to the devil.

### Eph 4:17–24

<sup>17</sup>Now this I say and testify in the Lord, that **you must no longer walk as the Gentiles do**, in the futility of their minds. <sup>18</sup>They are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, due to their hardness of heart. <sup>19</sup>They have become callous and have given themselves up to sensuality, greedy to practice every kind of impurity. <sup>20</sup>But that is not the way you learned Christ!— <sup>21</sup>assuming that you have heard about him and were taught in him, as the truth is in Jesus, <sup>22</sup>to **put off your old self**, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, <sup>23</sup>and to **be renewed in the spirit of your minds**, <sup>24</sup>and to **put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.**

### Eph 2:1–2

And **you were** dead in the trespasses and sins <sup>2</sup>in which you once walked, following the course of this world, **following the prince of the power of the air**, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience

### 1 Jn 4:4

<sup>4</sup>Little children, you are from God and have overcome them, for he who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.

### 1 Jn 5:19

<sup>19</sup>We know that we are from God, and the whole world lies in the power of the evil one.

### 2 Co 4:3–6

<sup>3</sup>And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. <sup>4</sup>In their case the **god of this world** has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. <sup>5</sup>For what we proclaim is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, with ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. <sup>6</sup>For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

### Rom 1:16-17

<sup>16</sup>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. <sup>17</sup>For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, "The righteous shall live by faith."