

# OpenTheo

## Introduction



### **Spiritual Warfare** - Steve Gregg

In this discourse, Steve Gregg delves into the concept of spiritual warfare and emphasizes that victory cannot be attained without confronting the darkness within ourselves. He provides an analysis of Biblical teachings to suggest that Christians play a critical role in stemming the tide of demonic power and eliminating human representatives of such systems. Further, he extrapolates from scriptural accounts of the war in the heavenlies, casting Michael the archangel and his forces against Satan and his followers, to highlight the importance of Christ's sacrifice in ultimately securing victory against the forces of darkness.

## Transcript

In this series, we're going to be examining the scriptural teaching about spiritual warfare. And spiritual warfare is a term that is not found in the Bible, but certainly the concept of spiritual warfare is not at all hard to find in the Bible. We find right from the very beginning of the book of Genesis, not the very beginning, but quite close to the beginning, in chapter 3, we find the appearance of an adversary, an adversary of God, who is determined to deceive and ruin mankind, and who is obviously setting himself against God.

Genesis chapter 3 does not tell us of the origins of this being, and we will explore what little there may be in scripture to guide us into an understanding of where Satan originated. But we find that he was on the scene almost as early as people were, maybe before. We don't know exactly when he appeared, but he appeared very shortly in the narrative, almost immediately after the appearance of human beings in the Garden of Eden.

He gained a decisive victory in that place, and has conducted a continuous warfare against God's purposes ever since. There have been notable thresholds and turning points in this battle. The most notable of all has been at the cross, where we are told by scripture that Jesus accomplished a tremendous victory over Satan.

However, we find that the victory is not so complete as to involve us in no warfare

ourselves. We actually are involved in warfare also, even though Jesus is said to have accomplished the victory. The nature of the warfare in which we find ourselves, and the concepts and philosophy of why this warfare exists, what we are to do about it and all that, is what we want to study.

We find that the motif of warfare is used quite frequently in scripture. In the Old Testament, there were actual physical wars fought between God's people and pagan nations. It is my understanding that the principal issues in these earthly battles was a spiritual concern, because all of the pagan nations other than Israel worshipped idols and false gods, or as it says in scripture, they worshipped demons.

Paul said in 1 Corinthians 10 and 12 that the sacrifices that the pagans offer, they offer to demons and not to God. So that there are demonic powers, spiritual wickedness associated with idolatry, and all the nations other than Israel were committed to idolatry. And therefore, they served as the forces of Satan.

That doesn't mean that among the pagans there were no individuals who were of a better sort. We know that Job, for example, who was not a Jew, was certainly of a better sort than the average. There were people like Ruth and Rahab who, when they became aware of Israel, converted to Israel's God.

There were pagans who were not as bad as other pagans, but in general the pagan nations represented satanic power, and they worshipped satanic powers. And if they had prevailed on the earth, then the light of the gospel presumably would never have had an opportunity to take hold. And therefore, we have warfare of a physical sort in the Old Testament between the people who have the truth, the people who know their God and do exploits, and the powers of darkness represented by actual people who were demonized in many cases and committed to demonic religions.

And this warfare, the Jews did not have the ability we have to simply attack the demons directly. This, I believe, is something that has changed since the cross. I think that as a result of what Jesus did, we can do warfare directly with the demonic powers.

The Jews did not have the victory of Christ in their history to look back on. They did not have the victory over the demonic powers directly that the Bible promises to Christians. And therefore, the best they could do to stem the tide of demonic power is to eliminate the human representatives of the demonic systems.

This is, of course, not the best way to fix things, since God cares for humans, even those who are lost in darkness, those who are taken captive by Satan to do His will. The Bible says God desires that they would have repentance granted to them and that they would turn. But the Jews in the Old Testament did not have the resources we have.

They did not have the spiritual insights that we have, and therefore their wars between

themselves and the powers of darkness were fought with physical enemies. But the New Testament tells us that we, who are Christians now, are in a very different kind of a warfare. In Ephesians 6, verse 12, it says, We do not wrestle against flesh and blood.

That is, our warfare that we conduct is not against human beings. Christians are not to be concerned with the same kind of warfare as the Jews were in the Old Testament. They did wrestle against flesh and blood.

We do not. According to Paul, in Ephesians 6, verse 12, We wrestle against principalities and against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age and against the spiritual wickedness in the heavenlies. The expression, in the heavenlies, is actually a very frequently repeated expression in the book of Ephesians.

In our Bibles it may be frequently translated, in heavenly places. We're told, for example, that Christ is above all principality and power himself, in the heavenlies, and that we are seated in Christ, at the right hand of God, in the heavenlies. The heavenlies are the spiritual realm, it would appear, and in Ephesians that's what Paul frequently refers to them as, the heavenlies.

And he says that we are in conflict with the forces of darkness in the heavenlies. This verse, Ephesians 6, verse 12. Now, this warfare in the heavenlies is depicted symbolically in a vision that John saw in Revelation, chapter 12.

And I'd like for you to turn there, because here we have, in my opinion, the most succinct and graphic depiction of the whole warfare, historically, between Satan and God, and ultimately the Christians and their warfare against Satan. In Revelation, chapter 12, we read, in verse 1, Now a great sign appeared in heaven, a woman clothed in the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a garland of twelve stars. And being with child, she cried out in labor and in pain to give birth.

And another sign appeared in heaven. Behold, a great fiery red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven diadems on his head. His tail drew a third of the stars of heaven, and threw them to the earth.

And the dragon stood before the woman, who was ready to give birth, to devour her child as soon as it was born. And she bore a male child, who was to rule all 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 has a place prepared by God, that they should feed her there one thousand two hundred and sixty days. And war broke out in heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon and his angels fought.

But they did not prevail, nor was a place found for them in heaven any longer. So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old called the devil and Satan, who deceives

the whole world. He was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.

Then I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now salvation and strength and the kingdom of our God and the power of his Christ have come. For the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night, has been cast down. And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony.

And they did not love their lives to the death. Therefore rejoice, O heavens, and you who dwell in them. Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea, for the devil has come down to you having great wrath, because he knows that his time is short.

Now when the dragon saw that he had been cast to earth, he persecuted the woman who gave birth to the male child. But the woman was given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness to her place, where she is nourished for a time and times and half a time from the presence of the serpent. So the serpent spewed water out of his mouth like a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away by the flood.

But the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed up the flood, which the dragon had spewed out of his mouth. And the dragon was enraged with the woman, and he went to make war with the rest of her offspring, who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ. Now, I would like to suggest to you that, first of all, this drama of which we just read is, like most of the book of Revelation, is written in very symbolic language.

It makes it difficult to know how the literal realities that are being described here are to be understood. And I would say we would not probably know the answer to that question if we did not have the rest of Scripture. It's very important that when we try to understand something in the book of Revelation, instead of just taking our first impressions from the passage in Revelation itself, we should ask ourselves whether it is describing something that is elsewhere described in less symbolic terms in the rest of Scripture, because all agree that Revelation is the most symbolic book in the Bible, and that being the case, it is susceptible to interpretation.

And if we find that a passage in Revelation is discussing matters that are clearly taught elsewhere in Scripture, then those clearer passages should be brought in to help decipher and decode the message in the book of Revelation. The book of Revelation is full of individual visions that John had about various subjects. This vision is one complete one, it seems to me, and it's a very dramatic one, about warfare in heaven, which is at a certain point resumed on earth.

Initially there is warfare between, on the one hand, Michael and his angels, and on the other hand, Satan and his angels, the dragon. Then a time comes when Satan is cast out of heaven, and the battle continues on earth. And the devil is enraged, and he carries on

his battle with those who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus, according to verse 17.

This battle is still continuing when the chapter closes. Now, I'd like to tell you what I believe this tells us about spiritual warfare in general. First of all, in order to make any sense of the chapter, we have to have some kind of a time frame for it.

There are two, I think, mistaken time frames that various people have attached to it, and I believe there is a correct time frame that can be ascertained by comparing Scripture with Scripture. On the one hand, we have this great dragon being cast out of heaven, in verse 9. There are many who would associate this verse with the actual origin of Satan, that he was an angel who was cast out of heaven before the creation of Adam and Eve, and became the devil. And when people look for proof texts of this particular scenario, this is sometimes one of the verses that is quoted.

You see, the dragon is cast out of heaven after a warfare. Apparently, those who apply it this way consider that warfare between Michael and his angels, and the dragon and his angels, which is found in verses 7 through 9, to be the warfare of a revolt that was conducted in heaven prior to human history. It is a scenario that most Christians apparently find in Scripture.

Certain scriptures are applied to teach this, that Satan was an angel, a high-ranking angel, in heaven before man was created, and he was overwhelmed with pride, and therefore he staged a revolt against God. And in his revolt, a third of the angels joined him. This revolt resulted in a war in heaven, and the final outcome of it was that Satan and his angels were cast down.

This, it is thought, was the beginning of the devil's career as the devil. And a third of the angels that revolted with Satan were also cast out, and they are called demons now. This is the general scenario that most people believe describes the origin of Satan and of the demons.

We will, at a later time, look at the scriptural case for that scenario, and see whether it is the most likely case in terms of interpreting the relevant scriptures. There is another scenario that at least should be considered a contrary one to that. However, as you well know, I'm sure, that is what most people understand to be the origin of the devil and of the demons.

Now you can see that there are some things in this chapter that might apply to such a scenario. We see in verse 4, the dragon's tail drawing a third of the stars of heaven and throwing them to the earth. This is the verse, the only verse, in the Bible that is applied to the idea, to prove the idea that a third of the angels fell.

The assumption is that the stars here are the angels. And since the dragon's tail throws

these stars to the earth, it speaks of a fall of a third of the angels. Now there are other places in the Bible that speak of angels sinning.

There are a handful or less of places that speak of that. But only this passage gives the fraction one third of the stars. And therefore, if the stars here represent angels, then one would have grounds for saying perhaps a third of the angels have fallen.

If not, if this verse does not say that, then we don't have any teaching anywhere in scripture that indicates that a third of the angels have fallen. We have of course the war in heaven in verses 7 and 8, and we find the dragon cast out in verse 9. This has been, as I said, by some assumed to be ancient history. Ancient even in John's time.

Speaking of a primordial battle even in pre-human history. There are some who have actually taught from Genesis 1.1 and Genesis 1.2, an idea that is usually called the gap theory. That in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

And then it says in verse 2 of Genesis, and the earth was formless and void. Many people believe that that formlessness and voidness of the earth in verse 2 was not its original state. And that we should understand it to say the earth became formless and void.

That God made the heavens and the earth in some form, but it later became formless. That he made it fruitful, but it became fruitless and void. The theory goes, and this is very elaborately put out in some books and teachings, that Lucifer was God's appointed ruler.

An angel appointed by God to sort of oversee a pre-Adamic, that is before Adam was created, human race. When God first made the heavens and the earth. And then Lucifer fell and he corrupted the whole pre-Adamic race.

And that this corruption led to a great judgment on the whole earth. So that the earth became formless and void. And there we have Genesis 1-2.

In other words, between Genesis 1-1 and Genesis 1-2, some people postulate a gap. In which we find the fall of Satan. And even a whole race of humans prior to Adam.

Where do they get these ideas? Very good question. It certainly isn't taught anywhere in scripture. But it is sort of a reading between the lines, literally.

That some have thought they can legitimately do in order to explain some of the mysteries of the origin of evil. Well, let me just say this. I do not believe that Revelation chapter 12 is talking about the origin of Satan.

I do not believe that there is any description here of an angel falling and becoming a devil. I don't particularly think there is any reference here to the angels falling in general. A third of the angels.

It could be. It is possible that verse 4 could refer to angels. But there is a better way of understanding the stars.

In this passage, which we will consider on another occasion. When we talk about the demons. More specifically.

But I will say that the time frame is not right. If we are going to try to apply this to the original fall of Satan. It's timing is way off here.

Because a prior to him being cast out. We see this woman ready to bear a child. In fact, we even see the woman bearing her child.

And when the dragon is cast out. There is an announcement in heaven in verse 10. That the casting out of the devil from heaven.

Results in salvation and strength in the kingdom of God arriving. And the power of Christ. Certainly these things cannot be said to have been accomplished before Adam was created.

And when the dragon finds himself cast out in verse 13. He persecutes the woman and her offspring. Who have the testimony of Jesus.

Now certainly when if Satan fell before the creation of Adam. There were none around who had the testimony of Jesus for him to persecute at that point. The time frame simply does not lend itself to that particular application.

That this is talking about ancient history way before the time of Christ. Way before the time of Adam. Now the other way that this is often applied wrongly I believe.

Is to apply it to some future time. Many people assume that the book of Revelation is all about the future. And therefore they take chapter 12 as being about the future also.

And the assumption is that sometime in the middle of the tribulation. Satan will experience a signal defeat in the heavenlies and be cast to earth. On this view Satan is still in the heavenlies right now.

And there will be during the first part of the tribulation. After the rapture of the church. A spiritual battle in the heavenlies between Michael and Satan and their respective armies.

This will result in Satan and his demons being thrown to the earth. And we read of course in verse 12. Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea.

For the devil has come down to you having great wrath. Because he knows he has a short time. It is thought this means that it is only three and a half years before the end of history as we know it.

That Satan will be cast down. He will know he has a short time. And therefore he will concentrate his efforts on the earth in the latter part of the tribulation period.

He will no longer have access to heaven at that point. And therefore he will make it really hellish on earth for those who are down here. Now this is a very common interpretation of these verses.

As I say the only thing in its favor, in favor of this interpretation. Is the assumption that Revelation is about a future tribulation. If it is, then there might be good reason to assume that the events of chapter 12 have yet to occur during a future tribulation.

If Revelation is not about a future tribulation, then there is not one reason in the world to apply this particular chapter in that particular way. What I find ironic is that there are Christians I've met who take it both ways. Who when they want to prove that Satan is a fallen angel and that a third of the angels fell with him.

They quote from this chapter. They quote verse 4 about a third of the angels and they quote verse 9 about the fall of Satan. And they are applying this to some ancient time even before the beginning of Old Testament history.

But then they consider nonetheless that the chapter is about a future tribulation. Which simply shows that Christians often do not try to synthesize their beliefs into a cohesive system that fits with context. Now I believe there is a way of understanding this chapter that fits the context in general.

And which is supported by reference to other scriptures on the same subject. The woman who is described in the opening verses of the chapter is almost certainly Israel. Or as many people would understand, the faithful remnant of Israel.

The reason for this identification is that it is said that she was clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a garland of twelve stars. Now that does not in itself shout out, this is Israel, you know, in obvious terms. But we do remember that in Genesis 37, 9, Joseph had a dream.

And in his dream he saw the sun and the moon and the eleven stars bowing down to him. Now here we have the sun and the moon and twelve stars, but the reason there were eleven stars bowing down to him was he was the twelfth star. And it was understood by his father that this dream applied to himself, his eleven brothers, and his father and his mother.

In other words, the family of Jacob, the family of Israel. And that's no doubt the deliberate imagery that is echoed here from Joseph's dream. We have the sun and the moon and the twelve stars, the twelve tribes of Israel.

And it's an image that almost all the early readers would have associated with Israel



because of the connection to it, of the imagery in Joseph's dream. And then we see that this woman is in pain to bear a child. And this child is born in verse 5, and it says that he is to rule all nations with the rod of iron.

This expression, though it could in a secondary sense be applied to Christians, is frequently applied and is originally applied in Scripture to Jesus. In Psalm chapter 2, it says that Jesus will be given the nations as his inheritance and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession. And he will rule them with the rod of iron and dash them in pieces as a potter's vessel is dashed in pieces and so forth.

This imagery is echoed in the New Testament several times with reference to Christ. And therefore, this male child is almost certainly Christ. And since the woman is pregnant and brings forth the male child, then the woman must be identified with whoever it is that brought Christ into the world.

Now, some people, the Catholics, for example, have applied this woman to Mary. Because it was Mary that was the mother of Jesus, and this woman is pregnant and brings forth Christ. However, I think it's better to be understood not as an individual, because later on the woman flees to the wilderness and has other children who are persecuted and so forth.

And the woman's career in the later verses doesn't seem to jibe with that of Mary, but it does jibe with the remnant of Israel. And Christ, of course, was born from Mary, but she was part of the remnant of Israel. The remnant of Israel are those who brought the Messiah into the world.

And we see, prior to Christ's birth, the nation of Israel laboring, toiling. Israel's pre-Christian history was a history of being persecuted, being conquered, being overrun, suffering. And especially the remnant, when the prophets arose, they even suffered at the hands of their own people.

But all of this suffering was not for nothing, it was like the birth pains. It was the suffering that they were enduring to bring the Messiah into the world. Now in verse 3 we see a dragon appears.

He is identified in verse 9 by name as the devil and Satan. So we know who the dragon is, and it's not a hard one to identify. And he is waiting for the child to be born.

He intends to kill the child, or consume it, as soon as it is born. This, no doubt, is reminiscent of the fact that when Jesus was about to be born, and when Jesus was born, there were specific attacks of the enemy to try to destroy him. It is very possible, in fact, that the devil hoped that the migration of Mary and Joseph to Bethlehem at the late stage of pregnancy might expose them to certain dangers.

We don't know much about this, but traveling was always hazardous through wilderness

areas in those days. Robbers frequently attacked people, and we don't know whether the devil specifically hoped to do anything to them on that road to Bethlehem, but it was about a week's journey through some unprotected areas. Certainly it would be more secure just to stay home until the baby was born.

But when the baby was born in Bethlehem, we know that Herod was moved, no doubt by Satan, although Satan is not named in the narrative as the one who instigated this, but Herod was certainly a demonized man. Anyone who knows the history of Herod the Great will have to conclude the man was tormented by demons, and very much animated by demonic power, like Hitler was. And we see that this man tried to kill the Messiah after Jesus was born, in fact, slaughtered all the infants under two years old in Bethlehem in order to attempt it.

However, the Messiah escaped. What's interesting here is that the Messiah's career, in verse 5 of this chapter, is passed over entirely. You see him born, you see his destiny mentioned, that he is to rule all nations with a rod of iron, and then he's caught up to God and to the throne.

Well, that's what happened to Jesus. It passes over the entire life of Christ for the reason of moving on to things that are subsequent to the life of Christ on earth. And so, when the child is caught up, this I take to be the resurrection and ascension of Christ.

And this chapter wants to focus on circumstances after that. We find the woman fleeing into the wilderness, and there she is sustained. Now, there's a period of time mentioned for her being sustained.

I will not worry too much about the identification of that period of time. Some people think, since it is three and a half years, that it is the time that corresponds with the length of the Jewish war. I don't necessarily think that's the right identification, but it could be.

Shortly after Jesus was ascended into heaven, the remnant of Israel fled into the wilderness because the Romans were coming. And the wars, which they fled to escape, lasted for three and a half years, began in 66 AD and ended in 70. But I am not even necessarily going to try to identify the 1260 days with that literal period.

I am of the opinion that the number is symbolic, but that's not very important to me. It could be literal or it could be symbolic. That's not essential in understanding the general meaning of the vision.

But the remnant of Israel, the church in Jerusalem, fled into the wilderness after the ascension of Christ. Not immediately, but eventually they had to. And they were sustained by God so that the church survived even when Jerusalem was destroyed.

And we see, interestingly, the same thing in verse 13 as we see in verse 6. We see, well

not 13 but 14, the woman was given two wings of a great eagle that she might fly into the wilderness to replace. We see her flight in verse 6 and we see her flight again in verse 14. Now what's going on between verse 6 and verse 14? Why do we read the same thing twice with some information in between? I'd like to suggest that verses 7 through 13 provide something of a parenthesis in the story and it's resumed again in verse 14.

It is resumed by repeating what was said already before the parenthesis. You've got the story narrated up through verse 6 and then the story picks up again in verse 14 where verse 6 left off. And the verses in between, verses 7 through 13, I think are parenthetical.

I think essentially they want to give us an insight into what was going on in the spiritual realm during the life of Christ and what was accomplished when he was caught up. It was after he was caught up in verses 5 and 6 that the woman fled to the wilderness. Interestingly, in verse 13 and 14, it's after the dragon was cast down that the woman is seen fleeing into the wilderness.

Did you notice that? In verses 5 and 6, the male child is caught up to God and the woman flees in the wilderness. In verses 13 and 14, the dragon is cast down and the woman flees in the wilderness. Apparently the casting down of a dragon is associated with the catching up of the male child.

Now I'd like to suggest that verses 7 through 12 in particular give us a glimpse. It's as if a veil is pulled away and we can see something going on in the heavenlies. But I'm going to suggest that the time frame of verses 7 through 12 corresponds with the life of Christ when he was on earth.

Why? Because it ends the same way that the life of Christ in this narrative ends. The life of Christ on earth ended with his being caught up to the throne of God. Then the woman fled in the wilderness.

This narrative in verses 7 through 12 ends with the dragon being cast out and the woman flees in the wilderness. What I'm suggesting is that the time frame of verses 7 through 12 overlaps the time frame of verse 5, the lifetime of the Messiah. And I'll defend that if I can in a moment.

Look at verse 7 again. So the great dragon was cast out. Now here's the first indicator of the time frame of this particular section.

The dragon was cast out. Now who wrote this book? You all know that this was written by the apostle John. If you'll look over at John's other significant book, actually all of his books are significant, but his other major book, the Gospel of John.

And chapter 12, Jesus just prior to his arrest and just prior to his crucifixion made this interesting announcement. In John 12, 31, Jesus said, Now is the judgment of this world.

Now the ruler of this world will be cast out.

Now the ruler of this world is the devil. I think that all evangelicals agree with that. That the ruler of the world, or as the King James puts it, the prince of this world, shall be cast out.

Now when? What time frame did Jesus associate with the casting out of the prince of this world? Well, he was referring to his own death. He was referring to his cross. He said, now the prince of the world is going to be cast out.

Now there are only two places in the Bible that mention specifically the devil being cast out. Now there are other terms that might be synonymous in other places. Maybe when Jesus said, I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven in Luke chapter 10 and verse 18.

But that's not the same term exactly. The only two places that literally say that the devil is cast out are in John 12 and in Revelation 12. Both written by the same author.

John 12, 31 and Revelation 12, 9. Now this being the case, when the same author twice uses the same expression, nobody else uses it in the Bible. So, it leads me to the suspicion that it means the same thing in both places. It's not necessarily a given, but it's at least a starting point for consideration.

It can be substantiated by other texts, but this is where my suspicions began. When I wondered what this chapter of Revelation 12 is about, I thought, well here's the dragon being cast out. Jesus said something about the devil being cast out.

In fact, he even identified a time for it. He says, now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And it was the same author who recorded both statements.

John. And it's impossible to imagine that John could have written one of these books without the material in the other one being in his mind if it had already been written. And therefore, I think, it likely that when it says the dragon was cast out, it was the same casting out of the dragon that Jesus referred to as taking place at his cross.

There's further confirmation of that in verse 10. Revelation 12, 10. It says that when the dragon was cast out, we read, I heard a loud voice in heaven say, now salvation and strength and the kingdom of our God and the power of his Christ have come.

Now, when Satan is cast out of heaven, salvation comes. The kingdom has come. The power of Christ has come.

Is there any known time in biblical history when those things came? I do believe that the Bible associates all of these things with the resurrection of Christ. Salvation, the kingdom, the power of Christ has come. When? When Jesus rose from the dead.

Or, as in the imagery of the passage, when Satan was cast out. Remember, the casting

out of Satan is immediately followed in verse 13 and 14 by the woman fleeing in the wilderness. Whereas in verses 5 and 6, the woman fleeing in the wilderness was followed immediately after the resurrection and ascension of Christ.

Therefore, I'm suggesting that verses 7 through 10 in particular describe a spiritual battle in the heavenlies that occurred during the lifetime of Christ. While Christ was on earth, there was a warfare in the heavenlies. When Jesus died and rose again, that war ended with Satan being cast out of heaven.

But what happens after that? Well, in the end of verse 10, it says that the accuser of our brethren who accused them before our God day and night has been cast down. And they, the brethren whom he accused, overcame him, the devil, by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony. And they did not love their lives to the death.

Now, it sounds as if it's saying that Satan concentrated his attacks on the people of God, the brethren. But they overcame him. They had spiritual resources.

They overcame him, but not without an ongoing battle. Satan was cast out of heaven, but he kept fighting against people this time. Not directly against angels, but against people.

And that's how we find the chapter ending in verse 17, that the devil continues to fight and to make war with those who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus. So, what I'm going to suggest is that this chapter talks about Israel before Christ is born, in the first few verses. Then Christ is born and ascends into heaven in verse 5. And then the remnant of Israel flees into the wilderness, probably associated with imminent danger a generation later.

And then we have this sort of parenthesis that tells us of what was going on in the heavenlies when Jesus was on earth. There was this battle going on in the heavenlies between the forces of darkness and the powers of God, represented by Michael and his angels. And the end of this conflict was when Jesus died and rose again and ascended.

This was the casting out of Satan, out of the heavenlies, so that he is no longer able to accuse the brethren before our God day and night. Why? Because who can lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is Christ who justifies, it's God who justifies. Christ is our advocate in heaven, how could Satan hope to ply any accusation against us effectively in heaven? He can accuse us on earth, and he does, but he won't be heard in heaven against us.

You know, you do read in the book of Job and in the book of Zechariah in chapter 3, you see Satan standing before God, accusing God's people. But you don't find that in the New Testament, because Jesus kicked him out of there, and he was cast out. And now Satan's ability is strictly on the earthly level, to attack and to make war with the saints,

which he has been doing ever since Jesus ascended into heaven.

He was actually doing that to some degree before that too, but he had also access to heaven to accuse us before God prior to that. But with the blood of Christ applied by our high priest at his ascension in the holy place not made with hands, there is no longer any room for accusations against God's elect in heaven. Now Satan, who once accused the brethren before our God day and night, is gone from there, but he's here.

And woe unto the inhabitants of the earth, because he knows that his time is limited, and he can't go on like this forever. Now, we see then a revelation of spiritual warfare. We see God's people attacked, but we see them fighting back.

In fact, we see them winning, because it says in verse 11, they overcame him. They win. And the reason they win is because, in verse 10, it says salvation has come, and the kingdom of God has come, and the power of Christ has come.

And the one who alienated them from God by his accusations has been thrown down. His accusations no longer can be heard by God. Now, all of this interpretation assumes that the war between Michael and his angels, on one hand, and the dragon and his angels in verse 7, was fought prior to the resurrection of Christ.

But I think during his ministry. You know, Jesus saw things going on in the heavenly sphere that others didn't see. The disciples were sent out in Luke chapter 10 on a mission to preach the gospel and cast out demons, which they did successfully, and they came back rejoicing about it.

And in Luke 10, verse 17 and following, it says, Then the seventy returned with joy, saying, Lord, even the demons are subject to us in your name. And he said to them, I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. Behold, I give you authority to trample on serpents and scorpions and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you.

Nevertheless, do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven. Now, what's interesting here is that the disciples had been out casting out demons. They were very impressed by this.

They came back talking about it, saying, Lord, you should have seen it. Man, the demons just go out when we command them in your name. They go out.

And Jesus said, I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. Now, that statement of Jesus is yet another verse that is often used and applied as if it is referring to the origin of Satan somewhere way, way back in pre-human times. And maybe it is.

Some people believe that what Jesus is saying is that, you know, you've seen tremendous victories here, but I've seen even greater things. I have seen, I was there

when Lucifer fell. Some people think Jesus is saying that.

I was there when Lucifer fell. And some people think that Jesus mentions that here in order to sort of hold them off from getting too arrogant, because after all, I saw Satan fall from his pride. And you be careful now.

Don't get too arrogant here, because the demons are subject to you. Just rejoice that your name is written in heaven. This is how some people understand the exchange that we just read between Jesus and his disciples.

There are others, and I have come to be one of them some years ago in my thinking on this, that feel that what Jesus is saying is something a little different than that. That they are saying, Lord, we see demons going out of people. And he said, I see something even greater happening.

You know, Jesus, on occasion, pointed out to people that what they saw him doing heralded something they could not see. For example, in Matthew chapter 12, Jesus said, If I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you. Remember that verse? That's Matthew 12, I think it's verse 28.

I'll let you know in a second if that's the verse number. Yes, but if I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, surely the kingdom of God has come upon you. Now what he's saying is, the kingdom of God has come, you haven't noticed it.

But you can see one thing, I'm casting out demons by the Spirit of God, and that is the signal to you of something that you can't see, but it has happened. And that is that the kingdom of God has overtaken you. There are times when Jesus pointed out that what was going on visibly was a token of what was going on invisibly in the spiritual realm.

And I personally believe, and you certainly are entitled to have a different theory, that when the disciples said, Lord, even the demons are subject to us in your name, and he said, I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven, that he was saying this, that you have seen only individual cases. You have seen individuals who are demons by your command. But I see something going on much more cosmic.

I see something happening much more universal. I see a reality in the spiritual realm which your experiences are only small pieces of. And that reality is the impending, rapid, total collapse of Satan's power in the heavens.

It's like you see demons going out of people, I see Satan coming down. I see him coming down very fast, like lightning, falling from heaven. Now, you don't have to understand it that way, but I personally understand it that way, and that would certainly harmonize with what Jesus said a little later when he said, now the prince of this world should be cast out.

And with Revelation chapter 12 also, Satan is thrown out of heaven. But there was this violent thing going on in the heavenlies. You know, Jesus, to all human appearances, was a pretty harmless guy.

He never heard a flea. You know, he was a gentle Jesus, meek and mild. He said a few harsh words to people occasionally, but he never laid a finger on anyone as far as we know.

Even when he drove the money changers out of the temple, we don't know that he ever whipped a person. All we really read of is him whipping the cattle and driving the animals out. Maybe he whipped the people, but there's certainly no suggestion of that in Scripture.

Jesus was largely a gentle, meek, harmless kind of a guy, it seems. So why is it that whenever demon-possessed people saw him, they screamed in terror and acted tormented and fell down and convulsed and so forth? I mean, what was it about Jesus that terrified them so much? Well, I'll tell you something. Look over at Revelation chapter 5. There may be a clue here.

In Revelation chapter 5, verse 5, John is in heaven. He sees the seven-sealed book. Initially, no one is found who is capable or worthy of loosing the seals and opening the book.

So John weeps in verse 4 that no one was found to do that. And in verse 5, one of the elders said to me, Do not weep. Behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the root of David, has prevailed to open the scroll and to loose its seven seals.

And I looked, and behold, in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures and in the midst of the elders stood a lamb, as though it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth. Now, I'm sure that you've noticed this strange conjunction of these two verses before, that an announcement is made that the Lion of the tribe of Judah has prevailed. And John looks up to see this lion, and what he actually sees is a lamb, seemingly very harmless.

Now, one of the things I think that this tells us is that while to the human eye, Jesus was like a lamb, to the inhabitants of heaven, they recognize him as a prevailing predator, a lion, conquering his foes. And that Jesus was simultaneously both. To the eyes of man, he was a mere lamb.

To the eyes of the angelic realm, he was a lion, tearing and devouring and taking his prey. And that prey was the devil and his demons. It's simply a different imagery that we read of in chapter 12 of Revelation, where it's Michael and his angels fighting with the dragon and so forth.

I believe that during the lifetime of Jesus, there was a tremendous, violent conflict going



on in the heavenlies. And to the human eye who saw Jesus, he wasn't much of a warrior. He wasn't a very intimidating character, but the demons saw him very differently.

The devil saw him very differently. The devil was terrified, and rightly so, because Jesus came ripping and tearing and conquering and prevailing, and he won. And so we see that the life of Jesus, though from the earthly point of view, a very peaceable, very mellow kind of a three and a half years of ministry.

Not mellow in the sense of boring, not at all. I mean, casting out demons, raising the dead, healing the sick, nothing boring about that. Walking on water, stopping storms.

But we can see that there was nothing very intimidating about Jesus in terms of people who feared physical harm. But the demons certainly feared him, and rightly so. He was a warrior.

There was a war going on in the spiritual realm in his presence, and when he died and rose again, it ended. Or I should say it changed venues, because the warfare was over the souls of man. The warfare was over the question of whether man would be accepted by God or not.

And as long as there was an enemy there to accuse man before God of sin, and those accusations, by the way, were often true. The devil didn't have to make up lies about us to accuse us to God. There's plenty of true material he had at his disposal to accuse us of things worthy of damnation.

But as long as we have an accuser throwing in God's face all of our sins and our guilt, it certainly had the effect of hindering our acceptance with God. But with Satan being thrown out, because Jesus now is at the right hand of God, interceding for us, there is now reconciliation. It was this war over the souls of men, and the issue was man's acceptance before God that was being fought during Jesus' lifetime and was won by him at the cross.

We'll have more to say about that later on, but let me just say this. Revelation is a wonderful book, not so much for what it tells us about future events, because I'm not sure that it tells us a great deal about future events, but what it tells us about the spiritual realm. You know, we live in a dual realm.

We are physical and we are spiritual. And we are very conscious of the physical realm every day. We wake up and we can see that it's raining outside, or that it's sunny outside.

We know it instantly. Our eyes, our ears tell us these things. We know if we're hot or cold or comfortable.

Our senses bring us information continuously about the material realm. We are very

much aware of being physical creatures, but we are less aware of the spiritual side. Now, all people have a spiritual side, although there is a difference between a Christian and a non-Christian in this respect, because the Bible indicates that the non-Christian is dead in trespasses and sins.

Their awareness, their discernment, their ability to function in the spiritual realm is not adequate. They are subject to deception in that realm. They are subject to control of the enemy in that realm.

And they're so dull spiritually, they don't even know when they're being controlled by the enemy. But the person who is born again has been born of the Spirit and is spiritually alive. The Bible says that the things of the Spirit, the natural man can't know them, can't receive them, because they're spiritually discerned.

It says that in 1 Corinthians 2:14. And so when we come alive spiritually, we become aware of a spiritual realm. But even that does not make us as aware of it as we are aware of our physical realm. Because, again, we're getting signals through all of our senses about the physical realm every moment of every day.

We simply can't be awake without having awareness of our physical environment. We know who's in the room with us without even asking the question. We just know it instantly by opening our eyes.

The information bombards us all the time. That is not always the case about the spiritual realm. The spiritual realm is also a reality in our lives all the time, and it affects us.

It affects our thought life. It affects our moral life. It affects our choices in life.

It affects our worldview. It's a spiritual reality that we're operating in all the time, but sometimes not so much aware of it as we should be. And occasionally you get a wake-up call from the spiritual realm.

Occasionally you'll have a dream. Occasionally you'll see a miracle. Occasionally you'll just have an impression of the presence of God or the presence of demons.

If you don't, then I'm surprised, because I know I do, and I'm not one given to mystical experiences too awfully much, but I've certainly known intuitively the presence of demons in a certain environment before. I remember when we first moved to Bandon, Oregon. I thought, since I was moving from Santa Cruz, California, where I'd lived for ten years, which is like the occult capital of the West Coast, a significant-sized city and university town, and since I'd done street ministry in Santa Cruz for ten years and dealt with demon-possessed people on a regular basis, as well as just the whole demonic atmosphere of the place, I thought that when I moved to the little town of Bandon, Oregon, whose posted population was 2,300 people, I thought I was moving into a spiritually tame environment.

I didn't realize that the town of Bandon was very much like that town in Peretti's book, *This Present Darkness*, a little tiny town that's dominated by demonic powers, by New Age witches and so forth, and that's exactly what Bandon is, or at least was in those days. I don't know what it's like now. I haven't been there.

But what was interesting is that the spiritual battles we had in Bandon actually were, in some cases, more intense than what we'd known in Santa Cruz, perhaps because our guard was down. We thought we were in a small town, no problem. But what I found was that almost everybody, every sensitive Christian I knew who came to Bandon, sensed immediately that there was a heaviness, a spiritual heaviness that came over them in that town.

Now, I don't, this is almost like, I mean, saying that, I realize, could be like the emperor's new clothes, saying, well, if you don't feel it, then you're not spiritual, you know. I mean, if you're not wise, you can't see him. I'm not trying to put that kind of trip on people.

I'm just trying to explain what my experience was and that of many spiritually minded people who came and visited who had not been informed that they were supposed to feel such things. They just came and they sensed it in Bandon that there was a very heavy spiritual oppression in that town. Actually, I'm a person who has never been one to be given over to depression.

In fact, I'd never known depression prior to that. And when I went there, I would experience irrational bouts with depression in that town. And so would almost everybody.

I remember I had a friend, I won't name him, but he was a friend of mine in ministry in Santa Cruz who I never saw him down. He was always up and always cheerful. And he came to work with us in Bandon after we'd been there for a while.

And interestingly enough, I remember saying to my wife, I said, if he gets depressed when he comes here, we'll know there's really something powerful going on here. Because I'd known him for years and he's always been extremely cheerful. And sure enough, it didn't take long, he was living in Bandon, that he had times where he got really depressed too.

And I'm not saying that everyone in Bandon gets depressed. Just everyone I knew did. But even people who weren't prone to that, it just was really a strange spiritual environment.

It was very heavy. It was like just trying to do evangelism there, just trying to worship there, was almost like trying to wade through thigh-deep mud or something. It was just so much resistance.

And it was very clear. The library, the Chamber of Commerce, the major businesses were

all run by New Agers, the schools. And it was very powerful.

In fact, we were able to convert a few people out of the New Age movement there. They came to our community and became part of us. Some of them informed us that the New Agers and the witches in town were very, very much aware of our existence and very much concerned and were doing whatever they could to hinder our activities.

We felt that. I remember the first Halloween we were there, the first October that we were in Bandon. We decided to have a worship and spiritual warfare service in our gymnasium, which we had there, on Halloween.

And we invited Christians from all over town to come. And we did. We had a tremendous time of worship and a tremendous time of spiritual warfare, it seems to me.

But that night, before our meeting was over, this storm blew in. I mean, an incredible storm blew. Hundreds of shingles off the house blew over trees, broke windows in the compound.

And it was the first storm of the year. And I think it was the worst storm of the year. It was amazing.

I remember walking back to my house across the compound from the gymnasium where we'd had this worship service. I remember just in the short distance there hearing the wind howling in a way that I had never heard the wind howl before. Bandon's a windy place.

And we had many wind storms even after that and the six years we lived there. But it was an uncanny, eerie thing. I mean, someone who doesn't believe in the spiritual realm could just chalk it up to some mind games I was playing with myself or something.

But it wasn't anything like that at all. It was just like a really, it was like evil. It was thick and violent.

No one got hurt. But property was damaged and it was a howling, loud wind all night long. I mean, it literally sounded like wolves howling or something.

It was bizarre and eerie. But I mean, I've been in situations where I sense the presence of demons before on many occasions. But most of the time I don't.

And there's a good chance there's demons in this room right now, but I don't sense them. I mean, what I'm trying to point out to you is that those times where we do become aware in a sensate manner, or when it's dramatically, it just dawns on us that we are in the presence of spiritual phenomena, it's the rare thing. It's like when the disciples were with Jesus, they didn't even always sense that they were in a supernatural realm with him when they were in the storm.

And Jesus woke up and he stilled the storm with a command. It says, when the storm was stilled, suddenly great fear came upon them. And they said, what manner of man is this? I mean, they were just suddenly, because of that miracle before their eyes, they just kind of were, fear took hold of them.

And they realized, wow, we're in the presence of something really supernatural here. And yet they'd been with Jesus all day and night for probably months or years at that time. But not every day did they sense what they sensed at that moment.

And so we are not as instantly and constantly aware of the spiritual realm as we are of the physical realm. I'm not saying that we don't know about it. Obviously, we have information in the scripture about it.

We can believe in the spiritual realm even when we have no sense of its presence. But there are times when its sense dawns upon us powerfully. There are times when you actually meet a demon-possessed person.

And suddenly it's like a wake-up call. Oh yeah, I'm in a world full of demons. And here's one right here.

And we need to be made aware more. And we need to have more vision of the spiritual realm. And I'm not saying we have to see it all the time.

But I was saying, one of the great things about the book of Revelation is that in the book of Revelation, the veil is pulled away occasionally, and we get to see what's going on in the spiritual realm. This happens in scripture only occasionally. In 2 Kings 6, Elisha was in the city of Dothan.

And the Syrian king had been trying many times to ambush the king of Israel. But every time an ambush was laid for the king of Israel, Elisha would inform the king of Israel by revelation that the king of Syria was there waiting for him. And so the king of Israel would escape and not go that way.

And this happened so many times that the king of Syria said to his cabinet, he said, now which of you is defecting to the other side? Which of you is actually informing the king of Israel of my plans? And they said, none of us are doing that. It's Elisha the prophet. He tells the king what you say in your bedchamber.

And so the king of Syria sent his armies to besiege the city of Dothan and to take Elisha. Well, Elisha's servant went out on the wall of the city one morning before Elisha had come out, and he saw the Syrian army surrounding the city and realized that they were after him and that they were doomed. Or thought they were doomed.

And he went and got Elisha and he said, Lord, Elisha, look, they're here to take us. We're in trouble. And Elisha was unbothered.

And he just said, oh, Lord, open his eyes. And the servant's eyes were opened and he saw not only the Syrian armies, but surrounding the Syrian armies, he saw chariots of fire covering the hillside, which we are to understand to be angelic armies. Now, the prayer of Elisha did not bring these angelic armies.

They were there already. It's simply that his servant didn't see them. But that didn't mean they were the last there.

The Bible says in Psalm 34, the angel of the Lord encamps around about them that fear him and delivers him. But we don't see that very often. We don't see our spiritual enemies with eyes very often.

We don't see the spiritual resources we have with our eyes very often. I remember once when I was a teenager, in fact, very, I think I must have been 16, maybe 17, and very new in the area of spiritual realities. I was in a band and our band played up in a Christian camp up in the mountains.

And there was a woman, one of the girls in the group, who was a songwriter and singer in our group. And she was there for the first set of material, but then we took a break. And when it came time to do the next set, she couldn't be found anywhere.

And there were search parties going out looking for her, and she couldn't be found anywhere. She just kind of disappeared during the break. And so we ended up having to play a second set of material without her, which wasn't all that easy because she was the lead singer on some of the material that she'd written.

But we managed to get through with the rest of the material, and then we went out searching for her again. Eventually she was found. And when she was found, she was all, she was like, I don't know how to describe her.

She wasn't in a trance, but she was really shaken up. She was kind of really spaced out. And she was shaken, and she was sitting out on the edge of the woods, just beyond the range of where the lights were facing out in the woods.

And she was really shaken up. She was trembling and all, and they actually gave her tranquilizers and stuff and calmed her down. And later on she explained that she had actually seen a man.

I personally didn't believe that it was a man, and neither did she. A man dressed all in black, and he was holding something shiny in his hands, which she thought was like jewels or something. And he was telling her to come out there and to, and he'd give her these jewels, come out to where he was.

He was out in the woods, further out in the dark than where she was. And she was not coming. She wasn't going to go, but she didn't run away either.

I guess kind of held spellbound by the situation. And he kept telling her, come over here and I'll give you these. And she didn't, and eventually he just left or disappeared or something.

We never got a real clear picture of what happened. She was kind of out of her, not in her right mind at the time she saw it and stuff. But I'm just saying that when I heard that as a youngster myself, it really kind of terrified me.

I mean, I thought, well, she saw the devil or a demon or something like that. And I really didn't know very much about spiritual warfare. I didn't know very much about our victory in Christ.

All I knew is that there was a demonic realm. I had only recently become aware of it. I remember as a Baptist kid, not even knowing that demons existed until missionaries, I don't remember how old I was, maybe 12, 13, 14 years old.

And one Sunday night, some missionaries that our church supported came back from Africa or somewhere and gave a report. And they talked about some of the encounters they'd had with demon-possessed people. And I remember at that age, even though I'd read the Bible, just awakening to the fact, wow, there's demon possession in the world today.

I never knew that. It had never occurred to me that such a phenomenon still was existing. And I don't know what I had, I don't know what my opinion had been prior to that.

I mean, I knew that we read in the Bible of demon-possessed people. But I guess I had assumed, since I never saw any demon-possessed people, that that was a phenomenon that was no longer around or something. And when I heard missionaries talk about it, it just startled me.

Wow, you mean there's demons in the world? There's still demon-possessed people? And that's how naive I was in my early teens. And then when this woman in our bands seemed like she saw a demon who didn't do her any physical harm or anything like that, but scared her out of her wits and scared me out of my wits just hearing about it. And I remember for a couple weeks there, I was terrified.

I remember thinking, what if the devil appears to me? I mean, I was awfully glad that it hadn't been me that had seen the demon, because I was particularly unprepared for that kind of an encounter. I didn't know what you should do in a case like that. But it was one of those wake-up calls.

It just reminded me, whoa, there's a spiritual realm out there. There's an enemy out there. I didn't see him, but someone who I knew very well saw him.

And I was afraid I'd see him, too. In fact, in those days, I remember there was a period of time where I was really terrified that if I looked over into a shadowy corner of a room that he'd be there leering at me, or that I even heard cases of people who were on drugs, which I never took drugs, but I heard of people who were on drugs who had demonic visions and so forth, and they'd look at their face in the mirror and instead of seeing themselves, they'd see a monstrous face looking back. And I remember thinking, what if that happens to me? I almost was afraid to look in the mirror.

I just was really irrationally afraid for a little while there. And then I got a hold of myself and said, wait a minute, so what? What if the devil does appear to me? He can't do anything more to me by appearing to me than he can do by not appearing to me. If he's around anyway, if he's around, maliciously doing me harm, it's almost better for me to know it.

It's better for me to see him than not to. Not that I ever longed to see him. I still don't long to see him.

But I just kind of got a grip and said, wait a minute, there's nothing to be afraid of. I mean, I believe there's a devil. I believe there's demons.

I believe that I'm a target. And whether I see them or not, that's a reality. What does it change if I can see it? If anything, it gives me an advantage that I don't have otherwise.

It's always an advantage to be able to see your enemy. Anyway, the devil never did appear to me. I never did get to see him, or a demon to this day.

But I'm saying that, like most people, I live my life in the natural realm. And insofar as I'm involved in the spiritual realm, it's kind of an invisible reality. I'm not always dynamically aware of it.

I'm always aware of it in the back of my mind because I know what the Scripture says. I know that we're in a battle, and I realize there's a devil out there, and there's demons, and there's people who are deceived, and there's all kinds of things going on. But from time to time, we get a glimpse of it.

Like Elisha's servant had his eyes open for a moment. His vision didn't create the reality. His vision simply made him aware of the reality that was already there.

From time to time, our eyes are open to see these things. I remember I once started a Christian house ministry in Albany, Oregon. There was a lot of demonic activity associated with the collapse of that ministry.

It was really interesting. But I moved, actually, from Santa Cruz to Albany, Oregon, back in 1978, to start a Christian house in Albany. I was single at the time, and there were about 12 other single people who moved to Albany with me.



We started this ministry, which actually looked like it had tremendous promise of being a fruitful ministry, but then some very bizarre demonic things really began to happen, and we later found out why. But before we moved to Albany, the group of us that later moved to Albany were in Santa Cruz at a school I was running there. There were a couple of young women who were in the school and who were part of the move to Albany later.

While in Santa Cruz, they woke up in the night, both of them woke up, and they saw the same thing at the same time in the middle of the night out their window. They looked out their window, and they saw this demonic, hideous face, this monstrous face, which at first was in the distance, and it came screaming up really up close, right up next to the window. It was like this huge, monstrous face was looking in the window in the middle of the night, and they both saw it.

They were both awake, and they both saw it. They just started calling on the name of Jesus, and the face went away. The next morning, they came to me.

By the way, these were credible women. These were not strange people. They were mature Christians.

I remember one of the girls told me, she said, I think that maybe God is trying to show us that there is going to be a lot of demonic attack against this move to start this ministry in Albany. Well, she certainly turned out to be right. That was one of the most bizarre experiences of ministry I've ever had.

We went to Albany. We started having outreach ministry. People were being saved.

Things were developing positively with us and the other Christians in town. We had a Bible study in the house that was going well. All of a sudden, things started getting weird.

People in the house who were part of the ministry, who had known each other for months or years, had been friends, began to really suspect each other of things that weren't happening, misinterpret remarks that were being made by each other, and see it as implying something it wasn't. It was just a weird, hard to explain kind of thing. There began to be these wedges in the relationships.

People, for no rational reason, began to just really distrust each other and suspect each other and accuse each other. It's real weird. I can't even express in words how weird it was, but it just felt strange, too.

Eventually, I decided we better pull this thing together and talk about what's going on, or else this ministry is going to fall apart. We had a meeting in the house to try to work things out. Even at the meeting, where one person would say, well, she said something or another, and the other person would respond, and they'd begin to talk, it was clear

that even there, as we spoke, that people were misinterpreting what each other were saying.

A person would say something, which I understood clearly what they meant, but someone else took it really wrong and was offended by it. It was just some really unbreakable thing was happening there. I remember at the time suggesting that it seemed like there were demonic powers.

One person would say something, and it seemed like the demons twisted it before it reached the ears of the other person to make them misunderstand it. I discounted that. I said, nah, I don't think so.

I was raised in a church, as in my early days in the Jesus movement, the church really discounted demonic activity as much as possible. It wasn't so much that Calvary Chapel, where I went, didn't believe in demonic activity. They did, but they were very cautious about getting too much into demon chasing.

There were deliverance ministries and things that just focused on demons all the time, and my pastor and the whole tenor of the church there were kind of slow to diagnose demon activity. They want to make sure that demons didn't get blamed for things that were really just flesh, just human flesh, because that happened a lot. A lot of people would talk about, well, I have a demon of drunkenness, and I have a demon of lust, and I have a demon of this and that, and gambling.

It was considered that this was just copying out, that these were just works of the flesh, and someone was blaming demons for it and saying the devil made me do it. Well, that was my conditioning. That was my background.

So when this person said, it seems like demons are involved here, I just kind of said, nah, this is just flesh. People are just acting immature. People are just not behaving like Christians.

But I now think, first of all, that I was wrong and that observation was correct, and if I had recognized it, we might have overcome it. But I never did, until it was too late, recognize that we were under a very peculiar demonic attack. Eventually, things got so badly, I just disbanded the house.

I told everyone, go away, move, go home. We're giving up this house. We're giving up this particular ministry.

And I spent the last night alone in that house, a big old drafty house. And I'll tell you, if I've ever sensed the presence of demons anywhere in my life, it was there in that house, that night, the last night I spent there. It was absolutely uncanny.

I mean, my skin was crawling. I couldn't hear them with my ears, but it's almost like I

could hear the whole house full of demonic laughter and sneering and all that kind of stuff. It was really bizarre.

I've never had quite the same experience since. But I just knew, I mean, I just knew in the spirit that there was tremendous demonic activity going on right there. The next day, we found out, I won't go through the details of how we found out, but it was discovered, that there was a woman, a witch, in town that had targeted our house, our ministry, for certain spells and things like that, that she was trying to put on it.

And had we known of it, we might well have combated it. But I was disinclined to blame demons for things that I thought human beings should be able to fix. I mean, people just obeying the Lord, walking in the spirit, should be able to get over these problems.

And probably that's true. But I was a little too reticent to attribute to demons what clearly was demonic. And so I've learned the hard way not to discount the possibilities of demonic attack being the explanation.

I remember the first time I ever encountered a demon-possessed person was, well, let's see. I was probably 19 years old, I'm not sure now. I think that's probably the case.

I might have been, yeah, I don't know. I think I was 19. And our band was playing again in another camp in the mountains, a Christian camp.

A different one, and on a different occasion. And after the band played, I gave a short evangelistic message and gave an altar call. And a few people came forward, about five.

And so I and the band took these five people into another room after the thing was over to counsel them, to sort of pray with them and get them started their Christian life. Now one of these people who came forward was a girl who was, I noticed right away, because it was not hard to notice, that her face was contorting on a regular basis. Like she had some kind of nervous tick, only worse than the average nervous tick.

It's almost like there'd be a severe grimace that would seize her every few seconds, I would say. I mean, maybe every 10 or 15 seconds or something. She'd just be sitting there without any provocation.

She just had this strange contortion of her facial muscles. And I remember thinking it was very peculiar, very strange. But again, I've always been kind of slow to say, well, that's a demon.

And I don't even know that that was the first impression I had. I just thought, well, this poor girl has a nervous problem. But we all, the whole band and the five people who came forward, including this girl, went into a cycle, and I began to counsel them about what it means to become a Christian and to become a disciple.

And after I'd done so, this woman was making these faces all through the whole time. And I asked them all individually, would you like to give your life to Christ today? Would you like to become a Christian? And each one said yes. But when I got to her, she said, I can't.

I said, no, you can. If you want to, you can become a Christian. She said, no, I can't.

I can't. Since then, I've encountered a number of demonically possessed people, I believe, who said similar things. They've said, no, I can't accept Christ, or something.

There are certain things I've heard again and again come from demon-possessed people that I realize now, but I didn't then. It's fairly characteristic of demon-possessed people to say certain kinds of things. And that's one of them.

And I remember being frustrated with her, because I said, no, you can. You can accept the Lord. She said, no, I can't.

I can't. And she didn't explain why, but I just said, oh, well, listen. I assigned one member of the band to each of these people who came forward to go off and to individually pray with them and stuff.

And so this one guy who was actually probably wasn't very wise to appoint him, but he was kind of a young Christian. He wasn't even in the band. He was just a guy who came to carry the equipment and work the sound and stuff.

But he took this girl off to pray with her. And like he left the room about it seems like 30 seconds later, he came back in. His eyes were big as saucers.

And he said, I think you better deal with this one. And I don't know why he thought I could do it. I've never seen a demon-possessed person before.

When he said, I think you better deal with this person. This thing just came to my mind. This woman is demon-possessed.

It's like I'm pretty sure the Lord told me because I'd never seen or suspect a person being demon-possessed before. But it just came to my mind like someone spoke in my ear. This woman is demon-possessed.

And I got kind of scared because I was only 19 years old and I'd never dealt with a demon-possessed person before. I'd never read any books about it since then. I've read a lot of them, but a lot of them are not worth reading.

I just had never studied out what you do about demon-possessed people because I'd never run into one before that. But I realized that it was my responsibility to do something about it. And so this guy and I took her aside and sat her down and I began to talk to her and try to find out what was going on.

And I just didn't know what to do with a demon-possessed person at that time. And I just in my mind thought, well, what did Jesus do? What did the apostles do when they encountered demon-possessed people? And there wasn't really much of a systematic procedure that I could come up with from Scripture. So I just kind of did everything I could imagine doing.

I commanded demons to come out of her. I asked her to profess her faith in Christ and to say Jesus is Lord. And I advised her to, I kind of led her in a confession of faith that I thought was probably sufficient to scare off demons.

I didn't know what I was doing. But something I did worked because eventually we prayed with her. And as we were praying and commanding demons to come out of her, by the way, her face had been going through these grimaces and contortions the whole time.

All of a sudden her face just relaxed. And it seemed as if just this glow, actually she was a very beautiful girl it turned out. I mean, you wouldn't have known it before that.

But when her face was relaxed, she just had this lovely, peaceful, glowing countenance. And tears started coming down her eyes. She started speaking in tongues and smiling broadly.

And she said, wow. She says, I think she said, what a rush is what she said or something like that. But that was like my first experience with a demon-possessed person.

And I just had these experiences that kind of woke me up to the whole reality of the demonic realm. I guess I've always, since I entered the ministry as a teenager, known that there were demons and known that there was a devil and known that there's something called spiritual warfare. But I, as I say, I don't and didn't live every day in the constant, you know, sensate awareness of the demonic realm or of the conflict.

A lot of times, most of the time, the devil acts in secrecy. And he prefers to be somewhat subtle. It's not really to his advantage for us to recognize that he's acting.

Because he really doesn't have the authority to win in a conflict if we are aware of him and of our resources and of our task and of what authority is ours in Christ. I really think it's not to the devil's advantage very often to show himself. And I, long ago, back in my teenage years, I gave up any fear of the devil ever appearing to me.

In fact, there's almost been times when I wish he would, so I'd know for sure what I was dealing with. I know that if he appeared to me, it wouldn't frighten me now. But it certainly frightened me in the early days because it was such an eerie, unknown realm.

It is easy to be afraid of the unknown. But in Revelation 12, where the currents flow, we see this realm graphically, just like Elisha's servants saw that realm briefly when his eyes

were open. And it's important that we ask God to open our eyes from time to time so that we can see what's going on in the spiritual realm.

Now, I don't think we have to know all the time, but I think there are times it's to our advantage to see and to know what's going on. Daniel spent three weeks praying and fasting. And at the end of that time, an angelic messenger came to him.

It's in Daniel chapter 10. And that angelic messenger indicated to Daniel that there had been a spiritual conflict during those whole three weeks that Daniel was praying, of which Daniel was not aware. But he was made aware of it when the angel arrived.

And in Daniel 10, 11-13, he said to me, Daniel, man greatly beloved, understand the words that I speak to you and stand upright, for I have now been sent to you. And while he was speaking this word to me, I stood trembling. Then he said to me, do not fear, Daniel, for from the first day that you set your heart to understand and to humble yourself before your God, your words were heard, and I have come because of your words.

But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me twenty-one days, and behold, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, for I had been left alone there with the king and the Persian. And now I have come to make you understand what will happen to your people in the latter days. Now this, Daniel was praying for insight, and God sent the answer by this messenger.

In fact, apparently, God sent the messenger right when Daniel began to pray. God didn't have to be persuaded. Daniel began to pray, and God sent the messenger the same day.

However, Daniel's praying and fasting had to continue for three weeks before the messenger got through. It's not because of the distance or the slowness of the messenger. It's because, he says, there was a withstanding of me by the prince of the kingdom of Persia.

Virtually all biblical scholars that I'm aware of agree that the prince of Persia is not a reference to a human prince, but is of a spiritual being, a principality as Paul refers to them in the heavenly places, that there was a spiritual warfare going on. Now Daniel was not aware of this warfare initially. He spent three weeks not being aware that his prayer had already been answered, and that God had already sent the answer, but that the answer had not gotten through because of resistance in the spiritual realm.

Daniel did not have to be aware of it. He was able to just keep his focus on God and pray and fast and so forth, but when it was all over, he was made aware of it, that there had been a spiritual conflict there. And although this is the only instance in the Bible that we read of somebody being made aware of this particular conflict, yet it's not too dissimilar from Jesus saying to the disciples, I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven, or from

John in Revelation seeing Satan cast out and this warfare between him and those who have the testimony of Jesus.

It's as if the curtain is pulled away briefly for us to be made aware of that, which we usually have to contend with without knowing it's there. Or if we know it's there, we generally just know it by theology. I mean, we have a theology about the devil.

We have a theology about demons. We know they exist, but we don't know them in the sense that we know the physical reality, not so immediately, not so dramatically, most of the time. But it's actually to our advantage, although it's uncomfortable when it happens, it's truly to our advantage on those rare occasions when God does pull away the curtain and lets us see what's going on.

It can be unnerving because we're cruising along in life pretty nice, thinking we've got a handle on everything, and we know we've got our environment under control, and then suddenly we become aware of a whole spiritual environment that we don't have under our control, or at least not immediately, which we have to gain control of. And this gaining of control over that spiritual environment is part of what spiritual warfare is about. And it helps to know of its existence once in a while.

It's great that God has occasionally, both in Scripture and in our experience from time to time, sort of pulled that veil away so that we see there is a conflict going on. There is an enemy that is not human, that we're not wrestling against flesh and blood. And the strongholds we're fighting against are not physical strongholds, but we are capable of overcoming them, as in Revelation it says, by the blood of the Lamb, by the word of their testimony, and by loving not their lives unto death.

And so with this introduction, I want to acquaint you with the fact that the call to be a Christian is a call to war. It is not a call to war like the Jews in the Old Testament were called to war. That is, they fought physical battles with physical enemies.

Today, killing physical enemies doesn't really describe what we're about. We're not here to destroy people's lives. Jesus said to his disciples, the Son of Man did not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them.

That was when John and James wanted to call fire out of heaven on the Samaritans, as Elijah did. And so, in the studies that follow, we're going to discuss various aspects of spiritual warfare. In the next one, we're going to talk about the origin of Satan somewhat, and try to see what we can discover on that subject.

And we have many other things, dealing with demons, and just resisting temptation, and making progress against the enemy. These are all areas we're going to be looking at. We'll talk about our armor and our weapons in due time.

At this point, we have to take a break, but we will come back to continue this series after

our break.