

## Spiritual Warfare Ephesians 6:12

Please turn to your bibles.

NASB. For our struggle is not against **flesh and blood**, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual *forces* of wickedness in the heavenly *places*.

NIV. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.

NKJ For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, {NU-Text reads *rulers of this darkness*.} against spiritual *hosts* of wickedness in the heavenly *places*.

wrestling, struggle, contest. with, against - specifies the opponent

NOT 'Blood and flesh' – usually flesh and blood = human beings, people.

Mt 16:17 And Jesus said to him, “Blessed are you, Simon Barjona, because **flesh and blood** did not reveal *this* to you, but My Father who is in heaven.

1Co 15:50 Now I say this, brethren, that **flesh and blood** cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable.

Ga 1:16 to reveal His Son in me so that I might preach Him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately consult with **flesh and blood**,

Heb 2:14 Therefore, since the children share in **flesh and blood**, He Himself likewise also partook of the same, that through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil,

**All our struggles seem to be with people – but Paul is pointing out that although conflict and agro come through people it is not the people themselves who are our opponents but there are ‘spiritual beings’ who are at the back of every struggle.**

**We will look at these in more detail a little later. But firstly we need to recognise the unseen world of unclean spirits that manipulate, provoke and tempt people (including us) to struggle against one another.**

Examples:

**Jesus and Peter.** Matt 16:21-23 “From that time Jesus began to show His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised up on the third day. Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, saying, “God forbid *it*, Lord! This shall never happen to You.” But He turned and said to Peter, “Get behind Me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to Me; for you are not setting your mind on God’s interests, but man’s.”

This all began with Satan in Gen 3 who appeared in the form of a beautiful lizard like creature 'the dragon' or serpent (with legs) and tempted Eve while Adam stood by and said nothing, he just let it happen, he went along with it and then had the gall to blame God 'The woman YOU gave me'!

As Paul says "Even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light' 2 Cor 11:14 in the context of warning about false teachers, prophets and apostles. "Therefore it is not surprising if his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness, whose end will be according to their deeds." So we find Satan's servants masquerading as religious leaders. In fact as we saw a few weeks ago RELIGION is one of Satan's principal means of enslaving people.

David provoked to count his armies. 1 Chron 21 (cf. 2Sam 24:10)

The spirit who incites Ahab and Jehoshaphat to go to war. 1 Kings 22:19-25.

Ananias and Saphira. Acts 5:1-11 v3 Then Peter said, "Ananias, how is it that Satan has so filled your heart that you have lied to the Holy Spirit and have kept for yourself some of the money you received for the land?"

Jesus said that the Religious leaders were children of the devil. John 8:44-45 "You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desire. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies. Yet because I tell the truth, you do not believe me!"

As we see it is difficult to separate the words of people who are unaware that they are being used by Satan from the lies of the Devil.

*How does this happen?*

Unclean spirits put wrong thoughts into our minds and we take them on board – we don't recognise them as lies or half-truths or as unkind, ungodly, unrighteous or critical, hurtful or damaging.

So let's look at the nature of these spiritual opponents

## **'Spiritual Opponents'.**

### **1. Rulers and authorities.**

With principalities /rulers

With powers/authorities

The well known AV phrase is 'principalities and powers' usually now translated 'rulers and authorities'. *Arché* is usually *beginning* and gives us words like archbishop, archenemy, archangel, archduke. So *arché* are originators or those who have supreme control, those in charge. Princes, rulers, presidents etc.

*Exousia* are authorities, those who have authority. The two words are often used together.

Lu 12:11 “When you are brought before synagogues, **rulers and authorities**, do not worry about how you will defend yourselves or what you will say,

Lu 20:20 Keeping a close watch on him, they sent spies, who pretended to be honest. They hoped to catch Jesus in something he said so that they might hand him over to the **rule and authority** of the governor.

1Co 15:24 Then the end will come, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father after he has destroyed all **rule, authority and power**.

Eph 1:21, far above all **rule and authority, power and dominion**, and every title that can be given, not only in the present age but also in the one to come.

Eph 2:2 in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the **ruler of the authority** of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient.

Eph 3:10 His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to **the rulers and authorities** in the heavenly realms,

Col 1:16 For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or **powers or rulers or authorities**; all things were created by him and for him.

Col 2:10 and you have been given fullness in Christ, who is the Head over every **rule and authority**.

**Col 2:15 And having disarmed **the rulers and authorities**, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.**

Tit 3:1 Remind the people to be subject **to rulers and authorities**, to be obedient, to be ready to do whatever is good,

In this present age there are many rulers and authorities. Human society needs rule and authority if it is not to descend into anarchy. – without rule “everyone did what was **right in his own eyes**’. God instituted all rule and authority Col 1:16, and has made Christ head over ALL rule and authority Col 2:10 who is far above all rule and authority and power and dominion (lordship) Eph 1:21

(Jud 17:6 In those days there was **no king in Israel**; every man did what was **right in his own eyes**.)

Jud 21:25 In those days there was **no king in Israel**; everyone did what was **right in his own eyes**.)

Pr 12:15 The way of a fool is **right in his own eyes**, But a wise man is he who listens to counsel.

Pr 21:2 Every man’s way is **right in his own eyes**, But the LORD weighs the hearts.)

Much of that rule and authority is found in human government. Luke 12: 11, Tit 3:1 but what Paul is making us aware of here is that there are also spiritual rulers and authorities Eph 2:2, 3:10, Col 2:15. These are the evil spiritual rulers and authorities with whom we struggle.

All rule and authority both in heaven and on earth will be ultimately terminated and God himself will rule with supreme authority over everything and everyone in the universe, in the new heaven and earth. 1 Cor 15:24. In which all future rule and authority will be initiated by him and will be gladly under his supreme headship.

## **2. The World Rulers of this darkness.**

with the cosmocrats of this darkness (or this age of darkness)

We get some tantalising glimpses of these cosmocrat in the book of Daniel. There seem to be 'heavenly princes' who rule over various people groups or territories. E.g. Prince of Persia, Prince of Greece, Israel's own Prince Michael. Dan 10, 12:1

There also seem to be other cosmocrats such as 'the Spirit of Antichrist' 1 John 4:3 and Jezebel. Rev 2:20, 1Kings 21,(23-25) 2 Kings 9.

WARNING. Some have tried to take authority over high level cosmocrats, but as John Paul Jackson warns this is as dangerous as throwing hatchets at the moon. They may come back down and wound or kill you. Daniel didn't try to get involved in what was going on 'upstairs' he prayed and as a result of his prayer stuff was happening upstairs, In the light of such cosmocrats, it is important to pray to GOD who is the ruler over every power and dominion. Let him deal with any funny stuff happening in the spiritual realm.

## **3. The Spiritual Forces of Wickedness in the Heavenly Places.**

with the spirituals of depravity in the heavenlies

- depravity, iniquity, wickedness, malice, evil purposes and desires; 'denotes the active exercise of a vicious disposition'.

- Heavenly places – generally means 'heavenly' belonging or pertaining to the spiritual realm where God dwells (heaven). term used by Paul particularly in Ephesians.

Eph 1:3 Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the **heavenly places** in Christ,

Eph 1:20 which He brought about in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the **heavenly places**,

Eph 2:6 and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the **heavenly places** in Christ Jesus,

Eph 3:10. so that the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known through the church to the rulers and the authorities in the **heavenly places**. & Eph 6:12

1 Cor 15:42-50 - we see that heavenly = spiritual. Jesus can be called the 'heavenly man' (v47 lit the second man from heaven). Although there are depraved spiritual beings in the heavenly places, God rules in the heavenly places. Christ has been raised up and is seated with his Father in the heavenly places, and we have been raised up with him and are seated with him in heavenly places, and have been blessed with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ and through us, his church, God's manifold wisdom is being made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places.

We have been regenerated into a new realm, not just the earthly realm but we now belong to and are part of the heavenly realm. In the earthly realm we were unwittingly subject to spiritual beings. We call these evil spirits, unclean spirits, and demons. They are spiritual beings that operate in the earthly realm. But now we are raised up to be seated with Christ in the heavenly realm we now have spiritual authority over such beings. So we see Jesus giving his disciples authority and power to cast out unclean spirits out of those who were demonised in any way, just as we see him doing so often (almost as often as he healed the sick)

We can cast out unclean spirits out of people, because of the authority we have in Christ in the heavenly places. We cannot cast down cosmocratic rulers, but we do not have to submit to their power, because we are in Christ, not under their power. See Jude v8-10, 2 Pet 2:10-11.

Rom 8:38-39. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

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