

## **GOD'S MIGHTY VICTORY PLAN**

### Spiritual Warfare Series – Part 1 of 3

#### **Introduction:**

1. “Life is a battle!” Our Christian life is a FIGHT -- difficulties, trials, temptations etc. Sometimes it seems to go easier -- almost as if we are out of the danger war zone; and at other times it's pretty intense -- we feel like the battle is raging right around us.
  
2. How is it in reality? That's a very, very important question. It's very hard to keep on fighting if we believe the enemy is really soon going to snatch us up and gain the upper hand.
  
3. There are differing answers to the question of the Christian and the FIGHT:
  - Some speak as if it's all over -- nothing to be concerned about or pay attention to -- Jesus won it all -- Satan isn't any more a bother to us!
  - Other Christians speak as if we have a big fight on our hands with enemy forces who could get us and destroy us at any moment if we're not careful.
  
4. Where does the Bible say? Yes, we will have tribulations and trials (John 16:33). We are in a FIGHT to the death. But are we in it alone? Is it really just up to us and our superior fighting prowess? **Where is God in all this?**
  
5. Sometimes in the midst of all the pressures and battles of life, we feel as if it all revolves around us. The Bible gives a very clear picture that the FIGHT, even our own personal fight, revolves around GOD. The Bible teaches that GOD IS THE WARRIOR WAGING WAR AGAINST HIS ENEMY -- AND TOTALLY DEFEATING HIM.
  
6. Let's allow the Word of truth to change our minds and so prepare us for the FIGHT that we are experiencing right now -- and will continue to face in the coming days on the field. And unto the end of our earthly journey. Therefore, put on the conviction and certainty that the REAL FIGHT is not between us and Satan, but between God and Satan. God is at war, and He gives us the great honour to be involved in HIS battle to destroy

Satan's evil kingdom. Therefore, we can enter God's FIGHT with confidence as we know our Captain and Commander-in-chief, God, has already established His victory.

7. The Bible describes God as “the Warrior” God going into battle -- on the war path -- in order to totally destroy the enemy of man’s souls and the one who has brought all the awful destruction into His beautiful creation. In other words, God has adopted an offensive strategy from the very beginning. He has been and continues to be proactive in the FIGHT, not on the defensive just waiting for the enemy to attack and then to defend His stronghold.

Note: The name "The LORD of hosts" or "the LORD Almighty" that means "the LORD of the heavenly armies", e.g. Psalm 24:10; cf. Joshua 5:14.

8. Let’s note how God the Warrior God goes into battle to rout and destroy His enemy and all the forces of darkness. We can highlight FIVE DIFFERENT PHASES:

#### **PHASE ONE: GOD FIGHTS FOR ISRAEL**

1. At the heart of God’s battle plan was His choosing a people for Himself. Through them He would bring forth One who would ultimately be the CONQUEROR -- Gen.3:15.

2. But Satan knew this plan and continually sought to thwart God’s plan. For example, by getting God’s people to intermarry and mix with other nations so that it would die out as a nation -- thus corrupting the pure seed through the unholy seed of other “nations”. See Numbers 25:1ff.

3. But God was always at work to fulfill His purposes through His chosen people, Israel. He goes out to war with them -- symbolised by the Ark of the Covenant going ahead of them in the battle. One of the most powerful examples of this truth is found in Exodus 15:1ff (verse 3).

4. We have to conclude from the OT that if God had not fought for His people, this small nation situated in a most vulnerable position would have been swallowed up by her far greater and larger numbers of enemies.

## **PHASE TWO: GOD FIGHTS AGAINST ISRAEL**

1. The Bible makes it very clear that God's special people were often allowed to suffer defeat in battle. As if God had turned against them. Allowed to suffer terrible defeats, e.g. at the hands of the Philistines. See 1 Samuel 4:1ff (where the Philistines capture the Ark).
2. The greatest sorrow in the OT was when Jerusalem, the holy city, with the centre of their whole life and the symbol of God's presence among them = the Temple, was destroyed. A terrible tragedy. Unbelievable. How could God do this? See Psalm 79.
3. Yet God had not abandoned His plan. He had punished them severely for their evil ways and their rebellion against Him -- for their spiritual adultery and prostitution -- mixing pure worship with the worship of other gods. For not keeping their covenant with Him. God whose name is Jealous stood against them.
4. But even in this, God was carrying out His plan. He was displaying the GLORY of His holy name -- that He was not a God who would tolerate evil and rebellion. And those who belonged to Him, to His covenant people, would be most severely disciplined if they His holy people profaned His holy name by their evil ways. Thus He disciplined His people for their evil ways, especially for the evil of their leaders who led the whole people into sin.
5. Implication: God not only fights for us, but He also fights against any cancer in the lives of His precious and holy people, acting as the divine Surgeon to cut the cancer out so that He can be honoured and glorified through the lives of His people.

## **PHASE THREE: GOD GIVES HOPE FOR THE FUTURE**

1. But God! Yes, in the utter hopelessness of their situation in exile/captivity, God was still at work to carry out His conquest against Satan. They were utterly defeated and powerless. But God raised up Cyrus and through this divine instrument, He brought back a remnant = a small group of His faithful ones -- to the Land to rebuild the city and the temple. GOD DID IT! See Ezra 1.

2. It wasn't at all easy for these Jews who returned to rebuild. But God worked out His battle strategy by raising up leaders who would lead them by His divine wisdom, e.g. Nehemiah and Ezra. He gave them prophets like Haggai and Zechariah who would keep encouraging them and bringing them back to His ways.

3. In those coming centuries before the birth of Christ, again God's people faced almost impossible foes -- forces of darkness (with the prince of darkness driving them on!). Yet in the heavenlies, the Captain of the Lord's heavenly hosts was continually fighting against them in order to carry out His divine strategy. See Daniel 10:13.

4. At this time, God gave through His servant, Daniel, a very clear and vivid picture of the ultimate defeat of the kingdom of darkness. There would be four successive evil kingdoms all arrayed against God's seemingly helpless people, but then would come the One "like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven...." (Daniel 7:8-14).

#### **PHASE FOUR: JESUS CHRIST BECOMES GOD'S CHOSEN WARRIOR & CONQUEROR**

1. God's deliverance was prophesied to be carried out through His Son. See Isaiah 9:6 "Mighty (or Warrior) God". His coming was prophesied in the context of conflict and victory. See Psalm 2; 110.

2. His coming happened in the midst of immense spiritual conflict with Satan seeking to defeat God's purposes at every turn:

a) Towards the infant Jesus -- Matt.2:1ff. Yet God rescued Jesus and his parents -- vs.13-18.

b) Towards Jesus at the very outset of His ministry -- at the temptation -- Matt.4:1-11. Yet Jesus totally routed Satan.

c) All around Jesus, there were people under Satan's control. Yet Jesus drove evil spirits out setting many free. See Mark 1:21-34; Luke 11:14-20; Acts 10:38.

- d) Satan also used religious leaders to trap Jesus and to render Him weak. Yet Jesus on every hand outwitted them. See Matt.22:15-22.
  - e) Even through Jesus' own disciples, Satan sought to trap and sidetrack Jesus. Yet Jesus was again aware of the mission God had given to Him. See Matt.16:21-23.
3. The climax of Jesus' spiritual conflict with the enemy would take place in Jerusalem (actually just outside at Calvary). Jesus knew this was the very reason why God His Father had sent Him into the world. So with the steady pace of a conqueror, He moved towards Jerusalem and His death. See Luke 9:51.
4. When God's chosen moment arrived, Jesus did not shrink back from this final battle. But God encouraged Him in various ways, preparing Him for the conflict. See John 12:23-33; Luke 22:39-46. He totally committed all things without fear into the hands of His Father because He knew the Father would bring Him through as Victor in His hour of conflict. See John 17; Psalm 16:9-11.
5. Jesus' darkest hour of suffering became God's greatest victory over all Satan and his forces -- on the cross and through the empty tomb. Jesus went to the cross, not as a helpless victim of fate, but as God's chosen Deliverer (Luke 9:35; cf. Acts 4:27-28).
- a) Before men's eyes, Jesus appeared as "weak" (Matt.27:41-44; II Cor.13:4). But through this apparent defeat, God showed His superior strength and wisdom (Acts 3:13-15).
  - b) Through the cross, Jesus totally routed His enemy (Col.2:15). There He won for man the right to approach God's holy presence clothed in His own perfect righteousness. (See Is.59:17; 61:10-11; I Peter 2:24; 3:18.) Jesus as the perfect Man regained for man his lost glory and position of honour and authority that he had formerly surrendered to Satan in the Garden.
6. When Jesus entered back into heaven, He entered with the shouts of triumph and victory of all the heavenly host (Phil.2:9-11). There He now reigns in all His glory and power over every principality and power (I Cor.15:22-26; Col.2:9-10; Rev.1:17-18).

7. The Bible says very clearly that Jesus Christ is presently ruling over all the affairs of the nations of this world continually pushing back the evil one and preparing the way for the final battle and ultimate destruction of Satan and all the enemies of God. Satan is NOT in charge of the history and the events of the world. JESUS IS! No satanic force has any power to withstand God's onward march towards the final day when God will complete all He has planned for the reconciliation of all things to Himself. See Matt.16:18; Col.1:19-20.

### **PHASE FIVE: JESUS WILL RETURN AS THE MIGHTY CONQUEROR**

1. One day Jesus will return in all His glory as the mighty Conqueror. All eyes will behold His glory both His people as well as all His enemies (Rev.1:7). With Him will come all His people who will join in the great final battle against Satan and his kingdom of darkness (I Thess.4:14-18; II Thess.1:5-8). He Himself spoke about this great event when He was on earth. See Matt.24:30.

- a) On that great day, He will wage the final war against the kingdom of darkness and will destroy Satan and all his evil powers along with all who have not obeyed the Gospel of God. See Rev.19:11-21; 20:11-15; 21:8.
- b) Then He will establish His eternal kingdom of light on earth. See Isaiah 9:6-7; Matt.26:64; Luke 21:25-28; Rev.5:12-14; 7:11-12.

2. At this time, the Triune God with His redeemed people will rest eternally. No longer will there be any battles to wage against our Adversary. At that moment, God's mission to have a people for Himself -- liberated and at home with Himself -- will have been forever accomplished. Forever, this people will delight in Him and serve Him. Hallelujah!

### **Conclusion:**

1. God is the Warrior-King. He has fought and overcome His enemy -- on our behalf. And now He calls us to battle -- to fight and to be "overcomers" in the name of the One under whose feet all the forces of darkness now rest (Eph.1:19-23).

2. These wonderful truths are to be for us more than just an exciting story to tell. Rather they are both the unshakable foundation on which to stand against the enemy and

also an continual encouragement to give hope and to help us keep fighting on in faith even when it may appear to us that the enemy has the upper hand in the FIGHT, that God's people are "a lost cause". The truth -- the reality is: JESUS IS THE CONQUEROR (Rev.2:7) and He will continue to fight for His precious people right through to the end.

See Jude 24-25: <sup>24</sup> *To him who is able to keep you from falling and to present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy—* <sup>25</sup> *to the only God our Savior be glory, majesty, power and authority, through Jesus Christ our Lord, before all ages, now and forevermore! Amen. 1*

3. So stand strong and firm because we have One who fights for us who is stronger than all the forces of darkness (see 1 John 4:4).

Notes prepared by Graham Roberts, Missionary Training School, Sept.11, 1997 with acknowledgement given for the Five Phases to Dr. Tremper Longman III from his article in the Westminster Theological Seminary "WTS Bulletin", vol.32, no.1/spring 1993 in a Bible study entitled "God's bold love".

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<sup>1</sup>*The New International Version*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House) 1984.