

"Out of Sight – Out of Mind"

One of the chief strategies of Satan is to have us forget him. Forget that we are at war. Forget that there are spiritual battles being waged in us and around us all the time. To simply live considering only what we see. In short, Satan likes being out of sight and out of mind.

This makes sense. When people are aware that they are at war their senses are aroused. They are alert and focused, ready at any moment to defend themselves against their enemy. Just imagine how vulnerable soldiers on the front line of a battlefield would be if they forgot they were at war.

This vulnerability is precisely what Satan wants from us. To forget that we as Christ's people are on the front lines. To forget we are at war and therefore let our guard down, becoming spiritually relaxed, open targets for his attacks. And with our modern world's pre-occupation with materialism and science, it is not hard to forget the spiritual realm. Most Americans, despite what they profess, live as though the spiritual realm were not real, and the supernatural as never occurring. All one has to do to forget Satan and spiritual warfare is go with the flow of our times, to sail with the currents of this world. Paul calls Satan the god of this world in 2 Corinthians 4:4.

Satan is a master-deceiver. He is all too happy to have us acknowledge him in theory, but deny his existence and his attacks in our daily lives. And let's face it, this is how we too often live. While there may be a few Christians in America who see demons under every rock, most of us do not keep present

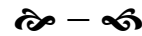
in our minds and our hearts the war we are engaged in, and this is precisely what our enemy wants. His strategy is to work incognito. To fly under the radar. To have us forget he is even there.

But he is there. He is here, among us. If we'd only have eyes to see. To see the carnage of his attacks. The wounded and mangled souls all around us. The victims and perpetrators of his crimes. While the person in the grocery aisle next to us, or even in the church pew next to us, may smile and say they are fine, we don't know what sort of spiritual onslaughts they are facing. May we pray for them. May we talk to them, listening more than speaking. May we encourage them in Christ with the truth of God's Word. And may we be open enough with each other to let our brothers and sisters know when we're being particularly attacked. In war there is strength in numbers. So, may we stand strong together against the schemes of the devil. Paul says in Ephesians 6:10-12, "Be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places."

- Pastor Matt Peery

"Spiritual Warfare"

This issue focuses on the topic of spiritual warfare. Here are some quotations to introduce the topic.



"In opposition...to all the suggestions of the devil, the sole, simple, and sufficient answer is the word of God. This puts to flight all the powers of darkness. The Christian finds this to be true in his individual experience. It dissipates his doubts; it drives away his fears; it delivers him from the power of Satan."

-Charles Hodge

"The enemy will not see you vanish into God's company without an effort to reclaim you."

-C. S. Lewis

"This is the great business of life – to 'put our mouths out of taste for those pleasures with which the tempter baits his hooks.' I know of no other way to triumph over sin long-term, than to gain a distaste for it, because of a superior satisfaction in God."

-John Piper

"It grieves me to say this, but the primary reason people are in bondage to sin is because people are bored with God. One of Satan's most effective tactics is to convince us that God is a drag."

-Sam Storms

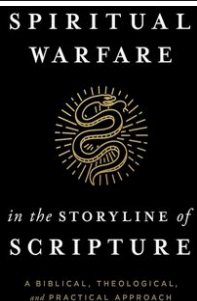
"So when the devil throws your sins in your face and declares that you deserve death and hell, tell him this:

'I admit that I deserve death and hell, what of it? For I know One who suffered and made satisfaction on my behalf. His name is Jesus Christ, Son of God, and where He is there I shall be also!'"

-Martin Luther

"Get behind me, Satan!"

-Jesus (Matt. 16:23)



Book Review: *Spiritual Warfare in the Storyline of Scripture*

Have you ever wondered what spiritual warfare is all about? Is it something that followers of Jesus need to be concerned about? Where did this concept come from, and what part does it have to play in these "last days" and the work of the church? In the book "Spiritual Warfare in the Storyline of Scripture" by Cook & Lawless, these and many more questions are answered in detail. This book of 338 pages is a

fairly long read, but is packed full of footnotes, references, and a detailed subject and scripture index at the end, thus making an excellent reference for additional future study.

Spiritual warfare has two major parts, defensive and offensive, following the analogy of physical warfare. In the defensive mode, we resist attack and hold our ground. However as this book so aptly explains, the offensive weapons need to be used if God's people are to be effective soldiers in His army, conquering new ground as Jesus commissioned us to do until He returns. In the pages of this book, we are given the background and examples from the Old Testament that are needed to gain a full understanding of this topic.

Described next are the teachings and examples of Jesus and the apostles, demonstrating that this theme of spiritual warfare carries through the whole of scripture from Genesis to Revelation.

I found most helpful Part Two of the book: Practical application of the concepts of spiritual warfare in the areas of the local church, evangelism, missions, family life, and leadership in the church.

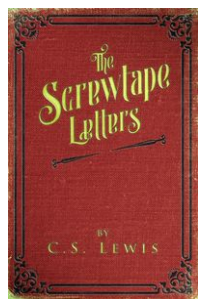
The final challenge in this book is to use these tools that God gives us to, "Go; serve God fully. Submit to Him, resist the devil, and finish well." I recommend this book to help you learn how to more fully please God and "finish well!" A copy of this book is available at Amazon and in the church library.

-Joe Council

“Practice the Pause”

In the school year of 2018/2019, there were a total of 25 school shootings in the USA. I had always heard about a school shooting here or there but I never thought that it would have gotten as bad as it did. At school, teachers started preparing us for school shootings, and more precautions were put in place. We started having many discussions about what to do if a shooter was to walk into our school. Police officers were starting to regularly patrol our hallways and I really struggled with the fear that our school would become another target.

One day, we were shown a documentary about a school shooting that had just recently happened. I asked to use the restroom because it was bothering me so much. As I sat in the stall, Satan started to fill my head with scenarios. I could physically feel a dark presence in that bathroom and I started to have a hard time breathing. I became overwhelmed with fear and anxiety; I was dealing with spiritual warfare first hand. I had never experienced a panic attack before and struggled with a fear as bad as I did that day. Thankfully, I have a weapon that most people don't have. The spirit which has never left me, was also in that room fighting my battle with me. God tells us in Acts 1:8, “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you...” Thankfully, we have a Father who will never leave or forsake us and he has armed us to fight our battles with the Holy Spirit and the Word of God. I paused and got out my phone and searched for some strength scriptures on Google and then I read the scripture out loud to myself. One of the scriptures was Psalm 91:11, “God will command His angels to protect you wherever you go.”



Book Review: *The Screwtape Letters*

I have read many books. Some were by my own free choice, some by the force of my teachers. Of the books I've read few have amazed me, wowed me, completely enraptured me, gaining my full attention.

C. S. Lewis' *The Screwtape Letters* is one of the few that have.

To begin with, the sheer imagination of Lewis is remarkable. As only Lewis could, he writes in *The Screwtape Letters* a collection of letters between an elder demon and his younger demon nephew that engages and penetrates our imaginations. The letters have an uncanny authenticity to them. Once you

Another one that I read was Isaiah 41: 10, which says, “Fear not, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous hand.” Instantly, I felt the dark power vacate the room. The pressure was taken off of my chest and I felt an immediate sense of peace. Spiritual Warfare is something that is constantly going on in the world and it is something that is not discussed enough. We may not see it at times, and sometimes we forget it is there.

However, Satan will do anything and everything to get Christians to take their eyes off of God. His goal is to steal, kill, and destroy. Whether it is a bad dream, an atheist friend, a phone, alcohol, drugs, an angry spouse, jealousy, or even a Christian friend, Satan will use everything he can to get us to stop showing God's light in the world. Know the fight you are fighting, and use God's weapons he has prepared for you to defeat Satan. To finish, I saw a quote on Pinterest that really spoke to me. It says “Practice the Pause. When in doubt, pause. When angry, pause. When tired, pause. When stressed, pause. And when you pause, pray.” When you are fighting your battles, pause and remember who is in control. He will never leave or forsake his children.

If you want to read more about Spiritual Warfare, I read a really good article online called “5 Signs You're in Spiritual Warfare and How to Fight It” By Debbie McDaniel.

-Heidi Dunn

have read them you find yourself thinking, “Yes, that is just how demons must think”, leaving you unable to view and experience the spiritual realm as you had before. Lewis' brilliance as an imaginative writer makes *The Screwtape Letters* a classic of spiritual literature.

To resist our enemy we have to know the ways of our enemy, how our enemy thinks. This is what Lewis provides. The letters from the elder uncle Screwtape to the younger Wormwood provide a sort of behind the scenes look at demonic activity in the daily life of ordinary people. What is learned can be quite surprising. For example, Lewis helps us understand why demons are fiercely opposed to joy, and why they are not opposed to religion and church attendance. The letters open our eyes to how God is seeking us through a good book, a

“Spiritual Warfare in Ghana”

Listed here are a few of the occasions my family witnessed African Christians dealing with spiritual warfare. Although I will talk a little about how we felt at the time. This is just to show you a sample of what was seen, not a critique or endorsement of it.

Joy and I were able to spend time with and observe godly men preach, pray and share the gospel to spiritual and Islamic pagans. When these men were teaching it was a sight to behold. It was powerful preaching from the heart, right in line with God's word. Then they would have the believers come to the front. They would inform the church that the devil is present, and they would start casting demons out of their congregation. One Easter morning we watched while a woman lay on the floor at the altar with the Pastor standing over her yelling, “Come out, come out, come out.” This went on repeatedly for about thirty minutes.

One day Joy and I were in a small village teaching at a local church when a woman was brought to us shaking violently. The villagers said she had a demon and asked us to expel it. For fifteen minutes the pastor commanded the demon to leave. After which the woman stopped shaking and was coherent. Everyone was happy to see her well. The Pastor said, “Now you have seen the mighty power of God over demons.” He told the lady's family they should come to church to learn the ways of God. Joy and I prayed for this poor lady. We were concerned that instead of a demon, she was not physically well.

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nice walk in the fresh air, the simple pleasures of life. The letters also open our eyes to how demons do not necessarily want us to commit heinous acts such as murder, but are quite happy to lull us to sleep spiritually, to live, as Thoreau put it, “lives of quiet desperation.” Brothers and sisters may we not let this happen to us. May we know that our victory has been won in Jesus' death and resurrection, and that Satan and his cohort are doomed, soon to be judged for all eternity.

A copy of *The Screwtape Letters* may be found at Amazon or other book stores, or may be downloaded freely from:

http://www.samizdat.qc.ca/arts/lit/PDFs/ScrewtapeLetters_CSL.pdf

-Pastor Matt Peery

Spiritual Warfare in Ghana

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Once I was called to a home of a frightened family. They told me that a witch had buried a statue in front of their door to curse them. They were on their knees begging me to pray and break the curse. Practically quoting Peter to Cornelius, I said, "Stand up, I am only a man." Then I asked them why they could not pray and break the curse. They said that the spirits were too powerful for them. I did pray for the family. After which I realized how deeply this was ingrained in them. They were in tears with fear when we arrived and now, they were praising and dancing because they had been "delivered." I tried to reason with them from the scriptures, but it was futile. As I left, they were jubilant but I was despairing.

Bob and Bonnie, missionaries with Seed Ministry, are my parents who have lived mostly in Ghana, West Africa for the last 20 years. One day as Bob was preaching a local juju man came into the service, all the congregation moved to the edges of the building from fear of what he might do. Bob called on the people to repent and to trust in Christ and to everyone's surprise this man came forward and made a profession of faith. He went home and brought all his idols and trinkets. The church people burned the items, and they praised God and prayed for this new Christian.

One church service where Bob was to preach. A lady came in late with her baby. She sat and sang during the praise time. Everything seemed completely normal. When Bob began to preach, Bonnie could hear someone behind her but thought it was the baby crying. Then the noise began to get louder and louder. Someone took the baby from this screaming woman when she started crawling on the floor like a crab. Someone brought her up to the front. Bonnie also went and they were all praying while this woman screamed and shook. After a considerable amount of time with everyone praying, Bob just began to sing. "What can wash away my sin, nothing but the blood of Jesus. What can make me whole again. Nothing but the blood of Jesus." When as he started singing, she started to calm down.

Bob just kept singing, "For my pardon this I see. Nothing but the blood of Jesus...This is all my hope and peace. Nothing but the blood of Jesus." He sang until she had calmed down completely. Then she sat up and was just as normal as could be again. Bob finished the service and she sat through the whole thing quietly, enjoying the message. Later Bob and Bonnie were told that this has happened before. The Pastor said that the lady goes home and tries to walk with Christ but her family refuses to let her go to church or to be around Christians or to even see a Bible. He said, "Then the evil spirits fill her again."

This is by design anecdotal and may seem to be only concerned with a tiny area located in the middle of a huge continent. But I assure you that what is said here, specifically about Christians in northern Ghana, can also be said of much of Africa.

-Toby Parker

One Year of Prayer

"All our perils are nothing, so long as we have prayer." - *Charles Spurgeon*

The Vietnam War era was certainly a perilous time. It was a time that required much prayer. The "Draft Lottery" was held December 1, 1969. I was one of four boys in the neighborhood eligible for the draft. We were assigned numbers based on our birthdays; the higher numbers would be exempt from the draft. At that time, I had been a Christian for a little over a year and as a babe in Christ, I had a lot to learn. With my immature faith, I was confident that God would keep me from being drafted. I did not know that I was experiencing the truth of Proverbs 16:9: "In their hearts humans plan their course, but the Lord establishes their steps." My number was 33 and that meant I was being drafted into the army. (My three friends had high numbers and were not drafted.) With my course effectively out of my own command, my prayer life increased.

I grew up doing hard work with loving parents who sometimes acted like drill sergeants, so basic training was not too difficult. After basic training, the army assigns soldiers advanced training in a military occupation. Surprisingly, there are many

military occupations: clerk, cook, chauffeur, artillery, infantry, medic, etc. I prayed that God would intervene so I could be assigned an occupation other than infantry. As it happened, the army sent me to Fort Ord, California where I received advanced training in infantry. I still had hope because not all infantry soldiers went to Vietnam, but I wondered if God was hearing my prayers. I had to learn the posture of Psalm 38:15: "But for you, O Lord, do I wait; it is you, O Lord my God, who will answer." I waited, with hope. Thanks be to God, Judy and I were married on July 12, 1970 in the short time between training and deployment. We spent 12 days together, and then I was sent to Vietnam - to war.

Was God testing me? There was no doubt in my mind. Sometimes the teacher is silent while the student is being tested. The army had issued me a small New Testament Bible which I carried with me everyday. The Bible was small, but God's word was a big part of my life in Vietnam and I was grateful for its protection and assurances. I learned to trust Psalm 119:114: "You are my refuge and my shield; I have put my hope in your word." Discussing the Gospel and God's word with fellow Christian soldiers helped me grow spiritually. My prayers became less and less self-orientated. I dropped the "I's" from my prayers and began to see God more clearly.

For over eight months of combat, I carried the radio/telephone for the company. One day, I got a message stating that a soldier in our company would be picked up by helicopter the next day. The soldier was identified by a code and a number. After I decoded the message, I realized the soldier being summoned was me. (Ironically, the coded number was 33 which happened to be the same number that made me eligible for the draft. I think God has a sense of humor.)

For context, when someone got a call to the rear area it usually meant there was a tragedy at home. They flew me back to the base at Long Bin where a sergeant gave me some new clothes. After a quick shower, he took me to a barber for a shave and a haircut. He drove me to the main headquarters building without telling anything about why all of this was happening. A man named Captain Dickens met me at headquarters and told me that I was there to be interviewed as a potential driver for Major General Getty.

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One Year of Prayer

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Compared to active war, driving a general at the rear area on a secure base is safe. Major General Getty was a Christian man who felt led by God to pick a driver from troops that had been in combat for at least eight months. The army has soldiers who are designated chauffeurs, but the general insisted that his driver would be someone who had been in combat. He chose me. At that time there were 334,600 American troops in Vietnam. Why was I chosen? The obvious, undeniable answer is because it was God's will - not my plan, not my course. There is no other explanation. Perhaps I was chosen so I could share this testimonial and give God the glory he deserves. He promises in Psalm 50:15, "And call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you shall glorify me." I learned a lot about God and myself through a year of prayer.

This quote from Jonathan Edwards says it best: "Of all the knowledge that we can ever obtain, the knowledge of God, and the knowledge of ourselves, are the most important."

-Pat Dunn

Dungeons and Dragons: Revelation 12 and Spiritual Warfare

The Bible speaks of a spiritual realm to which we often pay little attention. But this isn't true for many of our sisters and brothers around the world, nor for Christians in the past who had a keen sense of a realm beyond our own, filled with malevolent beings. How then to capture that same sense of realism and confidence? One of the best places to turn is Revelation 12.

Perhaps the clearest thing here is the identity of the child. He is Christ, the one installed as King over the nations in Psalm 2—the psalm quoted in Revelation 12:5. The dragon is identified a little later in Revelation 12 as "that ancient serpent, who is called the devil and Satan" (v. 9). The woman represents Israel, the one from whom the Messiah comes, her 12 tribes pictured in the 12 stars about her head.

The dragon stands behind Herod's attempts to murder Jesus at his birth. The story of God's people fleeing into the wilderness pursued by a dragon (as they will be in Rev. 12:13) echoes the exodus when God made a way through the sea and "pierced the dragon" in Isaiah's retelling (Isa. 51:9-10). Similarly, Pharaoh's slaughter of Hebrew boys is echoed in this attack on the male child in Revelation 12. What's so intriguing about this story is that it evokes so many other biblical stories.

Then there's the infamous attack on God's people that happened in the second century BC, when Jerusalem was desecrated under the attacks of Antiochus Epiphanes IV. Those attacks were prophesied in Daniel 8. Indeed, Daniel's prophecy also stands behind the dragon's description "with seven heads and ten horns" (Rev. 12:3). That's an allusion to the four beasts in Daniel 7 that strut on the world stage. So this dragon is a mashup of all those empires depicted as beasts in Daniel 7.

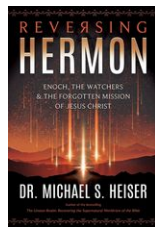
And finally, of course, we have here the story of a woman and a death-dealing serpent. This is also the Eden story. John is telling us that Jesus's birth is the climax of a long history of demonic attacks on God's people. Behind the snake in the garden, behind Pharaoh, behind the dungeons of Assyria and Babylon and Persia and Greece and Rome, and behind Herod, stands Satan: the dragon, the Prince of Darkness grim, seeking to devour God's people. Jesus' birth is the climax of a long history of demonic attacks on God's people who have overcome "by the blood of the lamb" (Rev. 12:11).

John writes, "[W]hen the dragon saw that he had been thrown down to the earth, he pursued the woman who had given birth to the male child" (Rev. 12:13). For the church, commissioned and sent in Revelation 11, these are stark words. There's a spiritual battle happening. Behind these earthly powers, the Devil will continue his mission to deceive and destroy. But they're also encouraging words. "His time is short." To the church it might feel brutal, but every blow says, "Not long now."

-David Shaw

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Book Review: Reversing Hermon

Where did sin come from? Should its origins affect our understanding of the war we wage against it? As soldiers in God's army, it is helpful to gain a full understanding of our enemy, whether that enemy be physical or spiritual. The book "Reversing Hermon: Enoch, the Watchers & the Forgotten Mission of Jesus Christ" by Dr. Michael S. Heiser can help the reader gain a deeper historical & theological under-

standing of the work Jesus did, is doing through His Holy Spirit in us, and will do in the future. At 181 pages in its main chapter content, it gives a well-organized in-depth study of how God's work through history includes the good news of salvation through Jesus, but also Jesus' execution of judgment against the forces of evil.

The Israelites through whom God brought us the Bible came out of and interacted with the cultures of surrounding people groups, and their language reflects that fact. In this book, Dr. Heiser explains how the stories from scripture, along with an understanding of belief systems and stories from contemporary sources, gives a more-complete understanding of how the Biblical narrative is presented.

An important example detailed in the book is the story of the pre-flood fall of mankind into near-complete depravity, except for Noah and his family (Genesis 6). Looking into the belief systems of the nearby ancient cultures involving their pantheons of gods and their stories of creation, some pre-dating the writing of Genesis by Moses, we can see the similarities in their accounts of ancient history. However, other cultures have twisted the story to make it appear that the perpetrators of evil are the so-called "good guys." God led Moses to give an accurate and corrective accounting of the events that led up to the flood, and the real reason for it. A key component of the ancient understanding of the Genesis 6 storyline is that evil spirits (whom we refer to as "fallen angels") conspired to completely corrupt mankind, beginning the process at the top of Mount Hermon, located in the area of northern Israel. This is the place where Jesus was transfigured (Mat. 17) and Jesus told his disciples that, "...on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Mat. 16:18) – a signal to the forces of evil that Jesus is taking back the nations.

As we fight evil in our daily lives, we understand our responsibility before God for our own sins, but should also understand that evil spirits strive to entice us into joining them in their sins and accuse us before God.

I recommend this book for all readers, and found it to be an easy read because of its well-organized layout and use of easy-to-understand language. The 86 pages of appendices and 57 pages of end-notes gives the reader an opportunity to dig deeper into the content. This book is available at Amazon, and we have a copy in the church library.

-Joe Council