

YOUR ADVERSARY



Spiritual Warfare in the Last Days

C. Parker Thomas

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Introduction

Recently, while looking through some of our oldest issues of the MCM, we uncovered this timely gem, published in about 1960! Originally published in two parts, it is reprinted here in its entirety. There is a simple directness and clarity in this teaching that will help anyone who desires to walk with the Lord and overcome in this hour. I believe that many of you will be amazed at how something written that long ago could be so perfectly relevant to the present need of God's people!

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HOW WELL DO YOU KNOW YOUR ENEMY?

“Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: Whom resist steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world. But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you.” I Peter 5:8-10.

In reality there are only two powers in the whole universe — God and Satan. Light and darkness. Life and death. One brings order, peace, and life, the other brings chaos, torment and death. One gives clarity, sanity and peace of mind; the other anguish, and insanity. God is the author of health and happiness. Satan is the author of sickness, sorrow and death. All good is from God. All evil is from Satan. James 1:17; 3:14-17. God is the deliverer. Satan is the oppressor.

THE TWO KINGDOMS

Under the reign of God we have his people and the myriad of angels that are ministering spirits sent forth to minister to the heirs of salvation. Heb. 1:14. Some of the angels are greater in power and wisdom than others. The talents and callings of God’s people vary also.

Under the reign of Satan, who is a fallen angel of a very high order, there are also a myriad of evil spirits known as demons. The world of lost unregenerate men are likewise his instruments. Satan’s kingdom is organized and divided into various provinces with fallen angels called princes over these provinces.

The evil prince of Persia that withstood the arch-angel, Gabriel, from coming to Daniel is an example of such an evil prince (Daniel 10:12-13). Of course Satan is the chief over all, called the prince of this world by Jesus and the prince of the power of the air by Paul. John 14:30; Eph. 2:2.

GOD’S PEOPLE

God’s people are hated and oppressed by this evil adversary and his wicked host of evil spirits. This battle has been going on since the garden of Eden. The unregenerate world of men and their world systems (governments) to a great extent are under the control of Satan. That is the reason the world hates Christ and his people. John 17:14, 15:18-19, II Tim. 3:12, I John 3:11-15.

The very first essential for God’s people in this great battle is to realize who the real enemy is. Ephesians 6:12 tells us that “We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, and against the

rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.” Though man is used of Satan as an instrument to cause much grief and sorrow, our real enemy is the unseen wicked forces of Satan. Failure to recognize this enemy has caused God’s people to suffer needlessly.

In Hosea 4:6 the Lord says, “My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge.” How true this is of the people that do not know who their real enemy is.

BIBLE EXAMPLES

There are many Bible examples where Jesus and the disciples met this enemy in the person of various evil spirits. They not only recognized these evil spirits but they also exercised authority over them in casting them out of their victims.

No doubt many of the physical and mental illnesses of today are the work of demons or evil spirits. Malignancies such as cancer, tumors, etc., are caused by some sort of destructive spirit life. Even germs that can only be seen under a microscope have life in them. Of course this life is satanic and destructive because it lives at the expense of man’s life.

In Mark 9 we have a young boy possessed with a spirit that caused him to foam at the mouth, gnash with his teeth and pine away (a type of melancholy). This spirit often cast this boy into the fire and into the water. The symptoms of this condition sound exactly like what we know today as epilepsy. However, Jesus called it a deaf and dumb spirit.

The woman in Luke 13 was all bowed over and Jesus called the spirit responsible for her condition a spirit of infirmity. Perhaps her condition today would be known as rheumatism or arthritis. Mary Magdalene had seven devils in her.

In other instances these spirits were called foul spirits, unclean spirits, spirits of divination, and simply evil spirits. In some cases the victims were what we would classify today as mental cases such as the Legion in Mark 5. In others the victims were affected physically and morally.

If we believe the Bible there is certainly abundant evidence that evil spirits are responsible for much of the ills (mental, physical and moral) that plague the human family. Perhaps some day we will be astonished to learn that this enemy either directly or indirectly is responsible for all of our troubles. However, let me inject this note of truth:

GOD IS SOVEREIGN

God is sovereign and Satan can only do that which God permits him to do. Right here is where many make a great mistake and end up with a perverted understanding of God's sovereignty and man's responsibility.

One extreme which is very popular today is: all sickness and oppression is of the devil and he has no business or right in afflicting any of God's creation. Therefore, we must resist the enemy in faith and break his yoke of bondage. This message sounds good and it is true up to a certain point, but the great failure on the part of many of those that trumpet abroad this message is: they fail to see or understand that God is all powerful and wise and that Satan can do nothing unless God permits him to do it. They often fail to see the infinite wisdom of God in permitting Satan to afflict man. We must realize that many times the sickness or affliction is the result of disobedience and sin. I Cor. 11:30-32. God simply steps aside and permits Satan to act as whipping boss, but, as in the case of Job, Satan can only go as far as the Lord will let him. Job 1:12.

In the case of Job, God permitted Satan to afflict Job to prove the faithful integrity of his servant. It also served as a refining fire to perfect his faith and make him a greater vessel of honor. As good a man as Job was he found things to repent of when the Lord appeared to him and he beheld his glory. Job 42:1-6. So did Isaiah the prophet. Isa. 6:1-7.

So in everything that happens to the child of God we can say, "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to his purpose." Rom. 8:28. And this includes the thorns in the flesh and even death if necessary.

The early church understood this truth and were instructed to turn certain ones "over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh that the spirit might be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus." I Cor. 5:1-5. This no doubt is an example of the sin unto death John referred to in I John 5:16-17. The sin unto death is so deliberate and willful until God removes his sovereign protection from the erring one and tells us not to pray for him. There are many examples in the Bible of people who committed this sin unto death.

In the old testament we have such stalwarts as King Saul and Jonathan, Samson, Moses, the disobedient prophet killed by a lion and King Asa who was diseased in his feet. In the new testament, Ananias and Sapphira, the drunken, gluttonous believers at Corinth, and the man that was guilty of fornication with his father's wife.

Now, I realize that the Lord has provided better things for his people but sometimes this is the only means whereby he can save some.

Once we see these truths in their proper perspective we are in a much better position to obtain real deliverance. Always and in every case our first concern should be spiritual. After our spirit has been set free and we are in fellowship with the Lord we can then take our rightful position in Christ and put the enemy to flight. No doubt about it God wants us to resist and vanquish this age-old enemy of Christ and the most blessed part of all is he has provided the means whereby we can resist and defeat this wily and evil adversary.

MUST GET READY

This is not only a desirable thing but it is a must for God's people in these days. The greatest time of testing the world has ever known is just ahead. Nothing less than the whole armour of God will do. Daniel said, "... there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation. . . many shall be purified, and made white, and tried; but the wicked shall do wickedly and none of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall understand." Daniel 12:1-10.

Jesus had reference to this same time of testing when he said, "For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened." Matt. 24:21-22.

John likewise warned us of this day when he recorded the words of the great revelation, "Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time." Rev. 12:12.

God's people must be prepared for this last all-out onslaught of Satan. Already this great power of darkness is increasing and great pressure is being exerted upon the people of God. Many are not aware of the true nature of what is responsible for their severe testings which are increasing by the minute.

OPPRESSION AND POSSESSION

There are two ways the enemy afflicts men. In some cases evil spirits actually take up their abode and live and dwell in a human being. At times such individuals appear normal but at other times they manifest the varied characteristics of the evil spirit that dwells in them. For instance if it is a covetous spirit the possessed person is very tight in money matters and is always on the alert and suspicious where money is involved. Sometimes

they will stint and save at the expense of eating out of garbage cans to save money.

One possessed of an alcohol demon becomes a hopeless alcoholic that is literally driven to drink even though he sincerely desires to give it up during times of sober reflection.

One possessed of a sex devil cannot cease from trying to satisfy his abnormal lust. This terrible lust spirit will also drive his victims to commit terrible sex crimes which we so often read about in the papers.

Any continual abnormal manifestation of the depraved nature of man such as jealousy, hatred, evil-speaking, lust, pride, physical uncleanness, various forms of insanity or mental delusions, may be caused by demon possession.

Sometimes the oppression of the enemy is almost as great as demon possession. In fact, I personally believe it can be more tormenting at times than demon possession. Christians are especially subject to the oppression of the enemy. Only those that have grown up in Christ and understand the wily ways of this enemy can resist him effectively.

I have personally dealt with several cases of severe demon oppression in the past few years and in most cases the victims were not even aware of the true source of their trouble. The greatest obstacle to overcome with most of them was to get them to understand and recognize their adversary. Most of them were suffering such mental anguish until they literally wished they could die. Some of them contemplated suicide. In every case they could not control their thoughts (Satan attacks through the mind). Sometimes they were filled with such fear of impending unknown disaster until they wanted to leave and go somewhere they were not known. They would have periods of great melancholy when they would not talk, laugh, or take an interest in things. They would want to be alone.

In almost every case they had a dread of meeting people. Some of them thought they were losing their mind. Others were filled with fear of things that were pure imagination. Some were told by the oppressing spirit that they had committed the unpardonable sin and could not be saved. Still others were convinced in their minds that some strange disease was going to ravage their body and make them prematurely old.

One such person got to the place where they would not go anywhere because they thought people were watching them. Sometimes the oppression was so great until they would weep and wish they could die. Such persons also often lose all interest in their home, their children, jobs, friends, etc. About the only relief they get is when they are asleep. One such person told me, "I wish I could go to sleep and never wake up."

The tragic thing about this awful condition is: these people could be delivered if they knew who their enemy was and how to resist him.

HOW TO DEFEAT SATAN

“Finally my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.” Eph. 6:10-13.

In this second part of the article I shall try to give you some of the simple fundamental rules that God in His infinite wisdom has given us to go by if we would defeat this adversary of our souls. Knowledge of these truths is the first step in this direction. The Lord spoke through Hosea in his day because of their willful ignorance of Him and His Word and said, **“My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge.” Hosea 4:6.** And that is primarily the reason people are being destroyed by this enemy today, not because there is no deliverance, not because the Lord won’t deliver them, but simply their own **willful ignorance** of God and His Word — and of course their own sinful disobedience and unwillingness to yield their lives to the Lord.

Prisons, insane asylums, and institutions are filled with poor demented human beings that are suffering the horrors of hell on earth because they would not walk in the light as He is in the light. One poor wretch that destroyed her own life said the day she committed suicide, “I am so miserable I can’t stand to live.” Another, who was later delivered said, “I wish I could die and get out of it.”

In addition to the multitudes in the various institutions there are millions of homes that are suffering because one or more of the household are victims of this adversary.

And the alarming fact is, this condition is worsening and shall continue to grow worse until this age ends in the awful tribulation judgments that are coming on the earth.

Nothing less than the “whole armour of God” will enable God’s people to stand **this last great onslaught of the enemy as he temporarily sets up his kingdom and rules the world.**

Oh, that I might find words of such weight and urgency that men might take heed. Truly you must “Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary

the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.” I Peter 5:8.

This is the message of the hour: get ready or perish.

Casualties are falling on this battlefield all around us. Even while this article was being written we received the shocking news that one who made a profession of faith under our own ministry and at one time had a burning testimony, did personal work, and taught a Sunday School class; had taken her own life with a gun.

We are no match for this adversary in our own strength; we must learn the secret of the Lord. Remember the Scripture says, “Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.” Eph. 6:10. Now the secret of the Lord is the necessary knowledge of your position in Christ, Satan and his ways, and God’s provision for your protection and deliverance.

YOUR POSITION IN CHRIST

This great adversary defeats many because they are ignorant of their position and inheritance in Christ. Through one of his chief weapons, “the lie,” he keeps these in darkness and unbelief concerning these things lest they break his yoke of bondage and go free. John 8:44; II Cor. 4:3-4; Acts 26:18. This enemy doesn’t want you to know that in Christ you are legally free. The whole purpose of Calvary was to set men free. After having come to Calvary, the door of freedom, why believe Satan’s lie and turn back to bondage and death?

“If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.” John 8:36.

“But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all. For it is written, Rejoice, thou barren that bearest not; break forth and cry, thou that travailest not; for the desolate hath many more children that she which hath a husband. Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise. But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now. Nevertheless what saith the scripture? Cast out the bondwoman and her son: for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman. So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman, but of the free.” Gal. 4:26-31.

“Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherefore Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage,” Gal. 5:2.

Now someone will say, “but this all has reference to the law.” That is true, but the club of condemnation and satanic power that blinds men to reality also consists of laws that shut men up in the prison house of despair and hopelessness. Satan has no legal right to keep them there because Christ

hath set them free. **The prison doors are open.** He has blotted “out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross; and having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it.” Col. 2:14-15.

We need to give “thanks unto the Father which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear son.” Col. 1:12-13.

Praise God! this deliverance is not just for past sins alone. Paul triumphantly said, “Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place.” II Cor. 2:14. Hallelujah! Thank God! for this eternal, all conquering grace.

No wonder the great apostle penned these immortal words to the Christians in Rome, “What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things.” Rom. 8:31-32. Read also the rest of this chapter. **The conclusion of the matter is we are free in Christ. Satan holds us in bondage only because we through ignorance and unbelief do not put him to flight and claim the blessings and benefits of our birthright.**

The next step to deliverance is to

KNOW YOUR ENEMY

his ways, his various devices and cunning treachery. Here is where many fall, they underestimate this wily, treacherous, and persistent foe. Though man is Satan’s chief instrument in his warfare against Christ and His people, our battle is not against flesh and blood. Eph. 6:12 says, “For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.”

Yes, the unseen forces of darkness (Satan and his hosts of evil spirits and fallen angels) are the real enemy back of the world’s ills and our own personal troubles. That urge to kill, destroy, take your own life, drown your troubles with alcohol come to your mind from the realm of the spirit and may be, in reality, an evil spirit urging you to evil. Though unseen to the natural eye they are there and they are your enemy. As a roaring lion looking for prey this enemy is seeking those whom he can devour (destroy spiritually, physically and mentally).

His ways are tricky and subtle, working through your senses and inherent weaknesses. One of the very first things in the Bible concerning him was that he was “more subtle than any beast of the field.” Gen. 3:1. He excels at putting doubt in men’s minds concerning God and His Word. And **in order to deceive some he uses truth but he misapplies it.** In other cases he mixes truth with error. His clever use of the lie is his best weapon. He doesn’t very often just bluntly tell you that God’s Word isn’t true. **He rationalizes and uses the knowledge and wisdom of the world to instill unbelief. And in order to do this he uses not the ignorant and uneducated, but the intellectual, the professional, and often so-called ministers of the gospel.**

Never think that the devil will appear to you as a monstrous hideous creature with horns, forked tail and cloven hooves. More than likely he will appear “as an angel of light.” II Cor. 11:14. For this reason the Word of God must be the final and only authority in all matters for determining truth and error. But the thing I am concerned about here is not the satanically inspired deceptions of the pseudo-Christian and scientific world but **the way Satan through evil spirits attacks the mind of man.**

The mind is the battleground. This is where the enemy must be recognized and defeated. Through the mind he enters your being and eventually takes control of your life. This is where the fiery darts of poison are hurled. This is where evil is conceived, murder, rape, theft, tyranny against God and man. **Control your thought life and Satan is helpless. All negative and wrong thinking eventually leads to evil.** Nip it in the bud and you save yourself much grief and sorrow. Constant and eternal vigilance must be maintained to keep Satan from gaining a foothold. **All thoughts of evil, thoughts that bring unrest and fear into your heart are from the enemy. Thoughts of evil about your fellowman, suspicion, resentment-provoking thoughts, thoughts that cause discouragement, gloom, dissatisfaction with your lot in life, jealousy, hatred, lust, covetousness, and thoughts of doubt concerning the Word of God all proceed from Satan.**

Paul no doubt had reference to this control of our thought life when he said, “For though we walk in the flesh we do not war after the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal” (fleshly) “but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds; **casting down imaginations** and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and **bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.**” II Cor. 10:3-5. Any and everything that doesn’t agree with and honor the teachings of

God's Word with respect to attitudes and conduct toward God and man is to be rejected and counted as from Satan. You must not pamper, entertain or tolerate things that are contrary to God, faith, holiness and love. Even our enemies are to be loved and prayed for. Any spirit that would lead you otherwise is from Satan.

RESISTING SATAN

James said, "Resist the devil and he will flee from you." James 4:7. Isn't that glorious! This enemy doesn't just slink away from us, but literally **flees from us** when we resist him in **faith**. There are three things mentioned in the Bible that are used to resist or overcome Satan. **The Word, the blood, and our testimony**. Luke 4:1-13, Rev. 12:11. What is meant by our testimony is our confession of faith, or confessing what God's Word **declares**.

Because of the blood shed on Calvary's cross you are free, not because you deserve it, not because you can earn it, but simply because He loved you and gave Himself for you. The cross is your guarantee of freedom. **Satan has no legal right or authority over you. Point him to the blood and the cross**. He hates it because it was there he was stripped of his power over you. It was there Jesus spoiled principalities and powers. Col. 2:14-15.

The devil doesn't want to be reminded of the blood because it spells his defeat. **Tell him you have been cleansed and redeemed by the blood and Christ is your Lord and master, not him**. Do this in faith next time Satan tries to intimidate you and see what happens.

USING THE WORD

Please notice that in the temptation of Christ by Satan in the wilderness, Jesus met every advance of the enemy with the Word of God. Luke 4:1-13. In resisting the three temptations Jesus quoted the scriptures to Satan by saying, "**It is written**." We likewise need to be fortified with the Word of God, the sword of the Spirit. If we know the Word we don't have to give him any quarter when he attacks but **meet him head-on and shout the victory while we cut him to pieces with our flashing two-edged sword**. Heb. 4:12.

Meet every thought, temptation and trial with the Word of God and see what happens. Now the last thing we mention in this battle against Satan is

YOUR TESTIMONY

Upon first consideration this may not seem to be very important but such is not the case. It is actually that most important piece of armour referred to as **the shield of faith** in verse 16 of Ephesians 6. Please note Paul

says, “Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.”

Now the word of testimony spoken of in Revelation 12:11 is nothing more or less than **confessing** the truth of **God in the face of faith-trying circumstances**. It is the brazen audacity to believe and confess what God’s Word says rather than give in to adverse or contrary circumstances. It is going against the natural current of prevailing conditions to confess that God is true. Not only is it confessing that God is true but it is **acting upon your confession**. It is marching forward into the swollen waters of Jordan before the waters are parted. It is a faith that staggers not at the promise but believes so strongly it gives glory to God in advance. Rom. 4:20.

Not only is it a faith that precipitates confession and action but it also **withstands the onslaughts of the adversary when all visible hope and help is gone. It is believing and standing on the naked Word of God alone knowing He will vindicate it in due time**; it is believing and confessing the promise of God while the enemy rages and hurls his lies, accusations, and sense laden thoughts of discouragement at you. It is like Jonah of old refusing to believe in lying vanities but rather the God of Israel who delivers even from the belly of the whale on the bottom of the ocean.

But surely someone will think, “such phenomenal faith is not for me.” If that is what you are thinking you are right now listening to the voice of the enemy. Rebuke him this instant; tell him he is a liar and the father of it. Also tell him that you can do all things through Christ which strengthens you. Phil 4:13. It is true that you may not be able to exercise such faith right now but it is also true that “God will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able, but will, with the temptation also make a way of escape that ye may be able to bear it.” I Cor. 10:13. Just remember this, the Lord will always supply faith and grace necessary to meet the demands of every trial.

As you exercise your faith it will develop and grow. Regardless of how little and meager you may think your faith is, begin to use it every opportunity you have. Confess with your mouth what God’s Word declares. **Keep confessing it even if you think it’s only of the mind. Sooner or later it will enter your heart and become a valuable weapon in your arsenal to fight Satan with.**

How we need to realize that if the living Christ dwells in us, potentially, we have power to raise the dead, cleanse the leper, cast out devils, and heal the sick. Not only that but the Lord has given us **power over all the power of the enemy**. Luke 10:19. As far as God is concerned we that are in Christ have overcome Satan and the world. I John 4:4, 5:4.

It is up to us to simply recognize these facts and confess and claim our rights in Christ. In closing let me say a few things about

COMMUNION AND WORSHIP

which are necessary if you are to maintain a Spirit-filled life. Only Spirit-filled men and women are capable of recognizing this wily adversary and resisting him effectively. Regular seasons of **prayer, praise and thanksgiving** are necessary in maintaining a good spiritual condition as good food, rest, fresh air, sunshine, and bodily exercise are in keeping physically strong. This battle being in the realm of the spirit, we must be spiritually strong to wage war against the enemy.

Prayer is your most potent weapon. Someone has rightly said, “Satan trembles when the weakest saint goes to his knees.” Through praise and thanksgiving we draw nigh to God and He in return draws nigh to us. James 4:8. Singing unto the Lord from your heart is a very effective form of praise and thanksgiving. It will work wonders in the lives of those being oppressed by evil spirits. God desires praise and worship and will bless you with his presence when you do so. By the same token Satan hates for you to worship the Lord and will flee from you when you do it.

There is a direct connection between being filled with the Spirit and worshipping the Lord. Eph. 5:18-20. You cannot worship and praise the Lord from your heart without being filled with the Spirit. “God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.” John 4:24. Being Spirit, the Lord is approached through these spiritual exercises. “Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless his name.” Psalms 100:4. It is while we are thus in His presence that we are strengthened in the inner man and spiritually fortified to meet and defeat our adversary the devil. May God bless and help everyone that reads this message to realize that, we are more than conquerors through Him that loves us. Rom. 8:37.

OTHER BOOKS

Lying Signs and Wonders, *by C. Parker Thomas*

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