



**How a war that began in  
Heaven came down to Earth**

**- John Tanner**



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## FOREWORD

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It is not necessary to teach converts from animism about the reality and existence of spirits because the spiritual realm has been a part of their daily lives since birth. Conversely, many Christians in the Western world have adopted a materialistic worldview which does not recognize the existence of a spiritual realm in life. It is significant that within the same Western cultural milieu, witchcraft and Eastern mystic religions have won adherents, Satanists openly threaten to destroy the Church, and in some sections of the Church there is serious talk of "spiritual warfare".

Christians in the West are being challenged to re-examine the teaching of the Scriptures about the existence of the spiritual world and its impact upon their efforts to reach every people group with the Gospel.

The Bible is an account of a war. The future of earth's population was at stake from day one. Satan rebelled in heaven and was cast down to earth. He determined that if he could not rule in heaven, then he would at least rule on earth. God created both man and woman in the Garden of Eden and gave them dominion over all that He had made. Satan counter-attacked and seduced the humans into following his ways. The rebellion had started! In the fullness of God's time He sent His Son who was also tempted just as we are, yet He did not sin. When He commenced His ministry, Jesus announced, "The Kingdom of God is here!" Our true King had arrived.

In the plan of God, Jesus gave His life a ransom for many. We who were once enslaved to Satan became children of the Most High God. The war continues, but the Book of Revelation describes how and when the final defeat of Satan and all his forces will be accomplished. In the meantime, we who believe do not fight *for* victory but *from* a position of victory because Christ has conquered Satan at the cross.

What can we know about the nature of this war? The Bible is not silent.

# CHAPTER 1 – War in Heaven!

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Imagine this headline:

## **There was war in Heaven!**

How would you react to this news?

Would you be sceptical? Would you be horrified?

Open your Bible to Revelation Chapter 12 and read it for yourself in verse 7. In the midst of a description of cataclysmic events, the Bible reports on something that happened in pre-human history.

Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon and his angels fought back. But he was not strong enough, and they lost their place in Heaven. The great dragon was hurled down – the ancient serpent called the devil or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him. (Rev.12:7-9)

Michael appears to have been the warrior leader of the loyal angels who purged Heaven of the evil of the original rebellion against God's reign. Verse four of the same chapter of Revelation has been interpreted as meaning that approximately one-third of the angels were cast down to earth with Satan.

We can be encouraged by some of the thoughts included in the following verses.

Therefore rejoice, you heavens and you who dwell in them! But woe to the earth and the sea, because the devil has gone down to you! He is filled with fury, because he knows that his time is short. (Rev.12:12)

Is this the only place in the Bible that refers to the fall of Satan?

No. You can read more detail in Isaiah 14 and Ezekiel 28.

Isaiah tells us that the one described as the morning star has been cast

down to the earth from Heaven because he desired to exalt his throne above the throne of God, the true and only sovereign. His sin was that he planned to make himself “like the Most High.” (verse 14) The passage then proceeds to describe the awful judgment of God upon the devil and his followers.

Ezekiel’s words are even more descriptive of Satan. He was “the model of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty.” (verse 12) He was on the holy mount of God and was “blameless in his ways from the day he was created until wickedness was found in him.” (verse 14) Because Satan became proud, God drove him from the holy mount and expelled him from Heaven. His citizenship was revoked. Where did God send Satan? Ezekiel records the facts, “I threw you to the earth; I made a spectacle of you before kings.” (verse 17)

Ezekiel records Satan’s ultimate fate consistently with all the other prophets, “You have come to a horrible end and will be no more.” (verse 19)

When this conflict took place wicked fallen beings were cast out of Heaven. Heaven was purged of the horrible rebellion against the authority of the one and only true God. This is indeed good news! The bad news is that they were cast down to where we live – to inhabit planet earth.

This raises a number of questions for us. The major question goes something like this. “How could a holy, all knowing God create beings which would sin and rebel against Him.”

Think of God’s perfect *agape* love. It is a self-giving love; a self-less love. Love so perfect loves everyone unconditionally. Such love as this in the Creator could not possibly create mindless robots who automatically loved Him in return. *Agape* love never demands that we respond with the same love. For this reason God made us so that we could choose, as an act of our free will, either to love Him or to reject Him. *Agape* love requires God to take a risk with everyone He creates. For this reason He comes to us in the Gospel and offers, not His love, but Himself to us, risking our rejection.

How can God stand it if He loves everyone perfectly, but the majority of people reject His love? This is where His mercy comes in. Creatures who reject *agape* love deserve punishment. But God’s mercy allows Him to hold the punishment back so that He can offer everyone an opportunity to

be forgiven.

Will God withhold His wrath forever? No! This Supreme Being who is by nature love, and holds His own awful wrath back from us by mercy, is also the God of justice. Satan has been cast out of Heaven and “He will come to a horrible end,” (Ezek.28:19) as will every human being who joins him in his rebellion against God.

What do we know about the influence which Satan and the other fallen angels have during this temporary period of their occupation of planet earth?

Many books have been written on this subject over the past decade. Some of the most popular books have not been based on the Bible’s teaching. Others have proven to be extremely helpful.

What are the recent origins of current interest among Western Christians in Principalities and Powers in particular, and the spiritual world in general? Is the Church reacting in fear to the challenges posed by the Satanists? Are Christians seeking to respond to the great needs of people who seem to be possessed by a greater spiritual force than modern medicine can combat? Or are they merely being influenced by another modern fad?

### **When did the Western world realise that the Church needed to be on a war footing?**

The beginning of a new interest in the Powers and Principalities came rather late. Although some (still very readable) studies in the field of comparative religion were published at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century, it was only when the theologians began to meditate about the political powers of National Socialism and racism that the discussion really began.

It is not surprising that this new attention first arose in Germany....  
(Van den Heuvel:1966,23,24)

The modern enquiry began with questions which related to the wider picture. Were there forces which had the power to control political leaders and nations? Were these forces of human origin or were they from an unseen spiritual realm? If such forces existed, how did their existence relate to the sovereignty and omnipotent power of God?

The enquiry led first to the Scriptures and then, particularly, to the letters of Paul.

Before we turn to the Bible I wish to recount two incidents which illustrate what can happen when the Church confronts evil powers in the Name of the risen Lord Jesus.



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## **CHAPTER 2 – War on Earth!**

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My little experience in the area of the Powers began with my exposure to a power encounter situation whilst in the Solomon Islands in 1988. There I became a part of a ministry team who, through prayer and Word ministry liberated the people of a Christian village from the bondage of a custom spirit which was operating through the chief who had reverted to syncretism. During subsequent visits to the Islands I have become more involved in warfare against the Powers alongside more experienced Island church leaders.

During the same period, I formed a small prayer team to assist in my ministry amongst Baptist churches in the State of Queensland, Australia. As the team prayed about ministry situations the Lord began to reveal the activity of various spirits. Effective prayer was offered and significant victories won.

### **Case Study 1 - The Formation of a New Mission**

The first meeting of the Evangelical Fellowship of the South Pacific was called for December 1989. The vision of those who had initiated the process was the formation of a new co-operative mission to reach out from the South Pacific. A steering committee had been at work for the previous eighteen months planning for this first regional gathering of the Evangelical Alliances of the South-west Pacific nations. The second military coup in Fiji during 1989 raised some doubts as to whether the event would even be staged, but more than 100 delegates met for five days at the University campus at Suva for the inaugural gathering.

On the first day, the Executive committee met. There were difficulties caused by the fear that the Europeans from Australia and New Zealand would be dominant and insensitive. Some delegates to the Executive proposed that a structure be adopted to place power in their own hands, to exclude some other races from leadership and to prevent the Europeans from participating.

The opening rally was staged in a large stadium on the Sunday evening and Joshua Daimoi's message was a stirring challenge to cooperation in

world mission. I was disappointed that the meeting seemed to lack impact and did not have the support of the local Christians.

A large group of participants who were skilled in spiritual warfare had come from the Evangelical church in the Solomon Islands with the intention of providing prayer support for the meetings. They began to pray around the clock. Much of what was achieved at the gathering was due to their faithfulness in prayer.

Monday was filled with devotional and plenary sessions and I was disappointed that an influential member of the Executive did not seem to be one in heart with the other leaders.

Tuesday morning was set aside for a joint presentation from Michael Maeliau and myself to explain the nature and benefits of the partnership arrangement between the South Sea Evangelical Church and the Baptist church in Queensland. We were supposed to model for the delegates how the proposed cooperative mission could operate. During the course of his presentation Michael referred to his feelings about his treatment by Australian based missions in the past. Previously he had felt that he had been brought to Australia so that the Missions could show the public an outstanding example of their work.

Since his church had become a partner with an Australian church, Australian Christians thought of him as a brother and not a product.

During the Australian group session that Tuesday afternoon, the entire Australian delegation agreed to stand on the stage the next day while a representative apologised to Michael and other brethren for past treatment. As soon as this agreement was made, I felt the Lord indicate to me that this was to be the turning point in the Conference and that there was a need to pray through the issues as soon as possible.

Late that same night three of us gathered for prayer - an Australian mission leader, an Aboriginal Christian leader and myself. We asked the Lord to reveal the cause of the difficulties and the reason for our lack of progress. Soon after, one of us saw a mental picture of a huge beast coming up out of the sea next to a particular island whose name was known. Almost immediately another brother commented that this was the beast mentioned in Revelation 13:1. Later a third member stated that he believed this to be the spirit of humanism. We all agreed that the problems seemed to have their source in those delegates who were operating only at the human level. We felt surprised and overwhelmed

and could only pray that God Himself would exercise His victory over this beast and give us deliverance.

After the devotional message on the Wednesday morning Michael led a time of prayer and gave an opportunity for the Australian delegates to present their apology.

As the suitably chastened Australian delegation began to move from the platform, Michael asked them to wait for prayer. He sensed that something was about to happen. And it did! For the next three hours delegation after delegation came to the stage to seek forgiveness of others. Reconciliation took place across all barriers and the way was cleared for the new mission to be formed without racial or national rivalry. It was a touch of revival.

**Reconciliation took place across all barriers... it was a touch of revival!**

The rest of the conference was a time of rich fellowship. The Evangelical Fellowship of the South Pacific was formed and a Missions Commission established to carry the Gospel out from the Pacific to other peoples.

The victory was won when the Powers were confronted through prayer.

## **Case Study 2 - Breakthrough in a Local Church**

In 1990 I was invited to participate in a series of meetings at the Mountain View Baptist church in Queensland. I decided to involve my prayer team in the leadership and ministry of the weekend. The team met for prayer prior to the weekend and asked the Lord to reveal what He wanted to do and the nature of any obstacles which stood in His way.

The team felt that the Lord revealed the following obstacles.

1. The nature of the public building was not conducive to worship and ministry.
2. There was disunity amongst the leadership.
3. There was lack of support for the pastor in his ministry.
4. The location of the meetings was near an ancient aboriginal bora ring (place of spirit worship).

5. One member had a vision of a war lasting the whole weekend.

The team made these points a matter for prayer and proceeded to the first meeting without a clear sense of victory.

During the first meeting the Lord revealed His presence but there was no open response. Later two women came to the team for prayer. At supper I was introduced to a married woman to whom I spoke for no more than ten minutes before becoming violently ill. I began to shake uncontrollably. My wife drove me to our home and the attack continued well into the night. It seemed that only prayer succeeded in bringing relief and we concluded that this was a direct satanic attack.

I felt well again the next day and spoke at two meetings. During the evening meeting I again made an appeal, only to find that the people were held back in their response. One or two people were counselled later.

One of the local men led the worship on Sunday morning and was interrupted by the Sunday School Superintendent who disagreed with something that he had said. Apparently this was not typical behaviour on the part of the Superintendent and she was quite surprised at her outburst. The service was disrupted and it was clear that the Holy Spirit was not in control. When I came to give the message the atmosphere was heavy and there seemed to be opposition. I felt discouraged and concluded the worship with the Lord's supper. Some people went home in an angry frame of mind.

On the Sunday afternoon we came back to the Lord in prayer, discouraged because we felt that Satan hindered the church. We asked God to show us the cause of the people's lack of response and He revealed that the building in which we were meeting was located exactly over an aboriginal bora ring. As a consequence there was a spirit of death which was holding the Christians in bondage. We prayed and bound the spirit and asked the Lord to liberate the church. We had a sense of victory.

That evening, prior to the service, a husband and wife asked if they could share a testimony. A number of significant events occurred that night. Among them were -

1. The testimony which expressed acceptance of God's control over the wife's terminal illness.

2. Many other testimonies concerning God's dealings with people about lack of unity in the church and loyalty to the pastor.
3. Many people responding spontaneously for counselling and prayer about relational issues in the family and church.

**It was clear that the Lord had set the church free through the defeat of the Powers in prayer on the Sunday afternoon.**

It was clear that the Lord had set the church free through the defeat of the Powers in prayer on the Sunday afternoon.

The two case studies are typical of many others which have occurred in my ministry during the last four years. The details can be authenticated by responsible Christian leaders. I can now see some patterns emerging and I advance them tentatively, rather than dogmatically, for further study and reflection.

### **Some tentative conclusions:**

1. People and churches can be hindered in their obedience to Christ by unrecognised spiritual powers.
2. God wants to reveal the activity of the Powers, in order that people might be liberated from their control.
3. God reveals the activity of the Powers to people who have been raised up together with Christ. Satan blinds unbelievers to this dimension of reality.
4. To say that God reveals His will to Christians today, implies that God communicates directly to people in a way that they can understand. In the team's experience He has done this in response to their desire to know how to pray effectively about specific situations. His revelations have come through –
  - (a) His Spirit bringing to mind a verse or passage from the Bible
  - (b) His Spirit bringing to mind a phrase or verse of a hymn or chorus
  - (c) His voice speaking in the mind
  - (d) A mental picture of a scene or a spirit

- (e) An insight
- (f) A great sense of peace.

In every case confirmation has been sought from others within the prayer group. If this confirmation is not forthcoming, a "wait and see" attitude is adopted.

5. When God chooses to reveal the activity of the Powers it is His intention to liberate the dominated people through the prayers of the church.
6. It is preferable to uncover the activity of the Powers before commencing a time of public ministry, otherwise the ministry may be hindered. However, God is not limited to this one method of operation.
7. Once the victory has been won through prayer, God can use the preaching of the Word or a testimony as a means of bringing release to people. After the problem has been identified and the Powers have been defeated, people need exhortation in order that they might stand in their new liberty. It is not helpful to criticise them. I have never disclosed the nature of the activity of the Powers to the people involved.
8. The preacher should aim to help God's people to live in the heavenly places. Therefore the thrust of public ministry should be positive, pointing to all that God has done in Christ. The kind of ministry outlined above should be conducted by a small group of intercessors in secret.

These stories are true. They are an account of my experiences in the work of the Lord. But experiences can never be elevated to the same level as truth derived from the Word of God. The Bible must test everything, as it is the only reliable source of truth. How do these stories and many others which you may have read measure up to what God's Word says?

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## **CHAPTER 3 – The Kingdom Strikes Back!**

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The first words that Jesus ever preached were, “Repent, for the Kingdom of heaven is near.” (Matt.4:17). The Kingdom was near because the King was now present. Any Kingdom is the sphere of the King or Queen’s reign. From the day that Adam and Eve fell into sin until the day that Jesus the Messiah came, Satan was “the Prince of this world.” (Jn 14:30)

The entry of Jesus into our world was timed to perfection. In that moment when the world had descended into the thick blackness of sin and the last few spiritual lights were flickering dimly, Jesus came – our Champion. Well, not really OUR Champion, because we did not love Him. God’s Champion! He came – not as a man at the very pinnacle of His powers, but as a helpless baby.

His life was immediately threatened by the jealous rage of a king who murdered all potential heirs to his throne including his own children. (Mt 2:16) Jesus was protected by God’s hand. An angel appeared to Joseph and told him to take Jesus and Mary to live in Egypt until the threat was past. (Mt.2:13). In these events we see both the hand of God and the hand of the Evil One.

### **Jesus tempted by the Devil**

After His baptism (Mt 3:13 ff), Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted by the devil. (Mt 4:1ff). We cannot underestimate the importance of this encounter. If the King of Heaven were to win, then Satan’s reign on earth would be severely threatened. But if the Prince of this world were to win, all of mankind would be doomed.

Jesus fasted for forty days and nights. He recognised that the forthcoming battle would be a spiritual one not a physical one.

Satan tempted Jesus, striking at the very heart of his personal sense of identity – “If you are the Son of God...” Jesus quoted the Bible, “Life is not sustained by physical food but by the Words which come from God.”

A second time Satan transported Jesus to the pinnacle of the temple roof in Jerusalem. “Prove you really are God’s Son by throwing yourself down so that the Angels will swoop to catch you as the Bible says.” Jesus quoted the Bible, “We are to trust God, not test Him!”

Again Jesus was transported to a high mountain where He could see all the Kingdoms of the world. “I will give all of these to you if you will bow down and worship me.” Notice that Jesus did not contest Satan’s claim to “own” the nations. He simply dismissed Satan by stating that he lived to do the two things Satan constantly refused to do. “Worship the Lord your God and serve Him only.”

The Bible says that the devil left Jesus then and angels came and ministered to Him. (Mt 4:11)

Jesus had met the Prince of this world and defeated him. There was more to come. What was the secret of Jesus’ success? Simple faith in His Father and knowing the Word of God. We can meet and defeat Satan using the same weapons.

Please notice the interplay of the natural and supernatural in the story thus far. They were not separate but inter-related.

## **Jesus’ ministry was God-centred and people focused**

Having decisively defeated Satan in this first round encounter, Jesus moved forward into the early stages of His earthly ministry. John had announced Him to his followers as “one who is more powerful than I, One who would baptise with the Holy Spirit and with fire.”(Mt 3:11)

**Jesus’ ministry was  
God-centred and  
people focused**

Here was no mere mortal! He came with power from above. Jesus announced to the world, “The Kingdom of Heaven is near!” The King had come and the gates of repentance had swung wide open. There was a way back to God. Satan’s captives, whether they were individuals, Kings or nations were now invited to join the rebellion against his deathly reign and to pledge allegiance to King Jesus.



As we read the following chapters we notice a very important trend. Jesus proceeded to implement God's will in the world. He did not focus on Satan but on people and their deepest needs. From this point on Satan is moved back stage. Whenever Jesus encountered demons, He dealt with them with authority and a minimum of fuss. They were simply one aspect of His healing ministry.

Jesus... preached the good news of the Kingdom, and healed every disease and sickness among the people...all who were ill with various diseases were brought to Him, those suffering severe pain, the demon-possessed, those having seizures, and the paralysed and He healed them. (Mt 4:23ff)

On a few occasions Jesus became involved in a power encounter with significant evil forces. When Jesus visited the country of the Gadarenes He was met by two men who inhabited the local cemetery. The men were supernaturally strong, extremely violent and they terrorised the local population. Incredibly, the men recognised Jesus (or at least the demons did!) and approached Him. Their intention was not to hurt Him for they immediately recognised that He had authority over them. (Mt 8:29) Notice that the demons spoke to Jesus through the voice of the men, "If you drive US out..." (v 31) The men were set free!

If you have a desire deep in your heart to serve Christ in liberating people who are in bondage to Satan then aspire to be like Him. Pray that you will be clothed with such authority that demons will recognise you and submit to Christ in you instantly.

## **Twelve Disciples given authority**

When Jesus sent His disciples out to preach for the first time, the Bible says, "He gave them authority to drive out evil spirits and to heal every disease and sickness. (Mt 10:1) They were to proclaim that the "Kingdom of Heaven was near." They were to "heal the sick, raise the dead, cast out demons and cleanse lepers."

The key word here is "authority." The same word is used by Jesus in the great commission when He said, "All authority is given to me...you go..." (Mt 28) Christ has given to His Church all the authority required to heal the sick, raise the dead, and cast out demons. Part of the function of the Heavenly Kingdom is to roll back the darkness caused by the Prince of this world. We are authorised by the King of Heaven to do this ministry.

We should embark upon it with joy, excitement and sensitivity towards those who are in bondage.

## **Jesus exorcises a demon**

There was one day when the disciples tried everything they could think of to deliver a boy from demonic power, but they failed. (Mt 17:14,18). The distraught father brought the lad to Jesus. Note the Master's method.

Firstly, he honoured the natural authority of the father. He did not impose His will on the situation. Then, He spoke to the demon, not the boy. He rebuked the demon. As it came out immediately, we may safely assume that He directed it to leave the boy. The change in the boy was evident immediately. The Bible says he was healed. This is a healthy model to learn.

The perplexed disciples asked Jesus later why they had failed to exorcise the demon. He replied that they lacked confident faith. Other older versions add that prayer and fasting is required in some cases. These two disciplines are faith building.

The natural and the supernatural were linked in the life experience of Jesus. The King of Heaven came to defeat the Prince of this world. Angels guided His parents and demons controlled the wicked King. Jesus met and delivered people whose lives were under the control of supernatural forces. He gave authority to His followers to deal with both the natural and supernatural causes of human suffering.

**The natural and the supernatural were linked in the life experience of Jesus**

The ultimate triumph of Jesus over Satan took place, not via a sword, but by a cross. There He gave His life a ransom for many. At the cross, Jesus defeated Satan, sin and death finally as we shall see in a later chapter.

Did the cross put an end to Satan and all his fallen angels? Is there evidence of a continuing battle subsequent to the cross?

## **Greater works shall you do...**

There is definitely continuity between the story of Jesus in the Gospels and the ongoing acts of the Holy Spirit in His newborn Church. Quite evidently, the preoccupation of the Apostles was to extend the Kingdom of the Lord Jesus everywhere. This sometimes involved confronting the powers of darkness.

I am not sure how the ministry of the Apostles would have been received in many Churches today.

On the Day of Pentecost people were “drummed to the earth” as the Spirit of God brought great conviction of sin. Modern translations use the term “cut to the heart.” This in no way conveys the violence or the mayhem of the scene as men cried out for fear of falling into the hands of a God of wrath. (Acts 2:37) They had, after all been accused by Peter of complicity in the death of God’s beloved Son.

The ministry of the Church, and particularly the Apostles, seemed to be propelled forward by the momentum of that first outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Think of some of the events that followed.

## **Peter’s healing ministry**

Among the many signs and wonders performed by Peter were miraculous healings of the sick and other people who were “tormented by evil spirits.” (Ch 5:16) The healings were evidently significant in terms of numbers and notoriety. The Bible says, “Crowds gathered from the towns around Jerusalem bringing their sick and those tormented *and all of them were healed*. The Apostles became so popular with the crowds that the High Priest and his associates were “filled with jealousy,” and ordered the apostles to be thrown in prison.

During the night an angel of the Lord appeared to the apostles. He opened the prison doors, and commanded them to go back into the public places and preach about Jesus. The next morning, the High Priest sent his soldiers to the prison. Everything was in order. The guards were still on duty. The gates were locked, but the prisoners were nowhere to be seen.

Once again we witness the interplay of the natural and the supernatural; good and evil. Corrupt religious systems and God's true messengers, the angels.

## **Philip in Samara**

Was this phenomena characteristic of Peter's ministry alone, or was it typical? We have already seen that the Bible speaks about "the Apostles" working signs and wonders.

Philip the evangelist went down to Samaria as a result of the persecution which followed Stephen's death. The Bible says that Stephen "proclaimed Christ" there and "did miraculous signs." The signs served as a means of attracting attention and authenticating the message.

What was the result of this evangelistic rally in a hitherto unreached part of the world?

Evil spirits came shrieking out of many. Many paralytics and cripples were healed; and there was great joy in that city.

What a contrast to the quiet orderliness of Western Church services!

## **Enter Simon the Sorcerer and friends**

Up until now, we have noted the appearance of the forces of evil in the person of Satan, corrupt political and religious leaders and systems, and in the torment suffered by people through demonisation. Now we are introduced to a person who deals in spiritual power – a sorcerer.

The people were in awe of him and actually called him "The Great Power." (Acts 8:9) To his followers, Simon was regarded as the one who exercised the power of, and received revelations from, the Supreme Being. No doubt he was a man with a lust for power who had become a captive to the Evil One. He claimed to have become a believer along with many others, but Peter's rebuke in verse 22 seems to indicate that Simon's heart had remained unchanged.

In this story we see that God's power, operating through the Apostles was

not only greater than the demons which held people in bondage, but also greater than the power of an evil representative of Satan.

A similar encounter is recorded in Chapter 13. The Church in Antioch sent out Barnabas and Saul as the first missionaries. Their first missionary trip took them to Cyprus. They travelled from place to place preaching the Gospel and ministering to people until they came to Paphos, the administration centre for the Roman government. The pro-consul was interested to hear the Word of God so he sent for the two missionaries. Even as they spoke of their faith with the official, his attendant, Elymas, who was a Jewish sorcerer, sought to turn the official's heart away from the faith. (v8)

Saul, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit immediately summed up the situation. "You are a child of the devil... you are full of all kinds of deceit and trickery," he said. "Will you never stop perverting the right ways of the Lord?" God struck the sorcerer with blindness and the pro-consul believed.

## **Power Encounters with other false religions**

In Lystra, Paul was used by God to heal a man who had been lame from birth. (Acts 14:8) The change in the man was so spectacular that it made a strong impression on the crowds. They wrongly identified the apostles as the gods which they worshipped. The priest of Zeus brought animals to offer as sacrifices to the apostles.

Despite the protests and actions of the apostles, no one came to believe in Jesus in that City and Paul was stoned and left for dead.

We must honestly conclude that on this occasion, Satan's strategy of compelling the people to worship the Apostles seems to have successfully thwarted their attempts to evangelise the Lycaonian people.

Paul journeyed on to Ephesus where he taught in the Synagogue for three months. After that time some of the Jews became obstinate and publicly opposed the missionaries. Paul moved to the hall of Tyrannus and continued to preach there daily with remarkable results. (Ch 19:10)

God did extraordinary miracles through Paul, so that even handkerchiefs and aprons that had touched him were taken to the

sick, and their illnesses were cured and the evil spirits left them.  
(verse 11)

By way of contrast, the Bible then mentions an incident when some Jews tried to drive out some evil spirits using Paul's name. But borrowed authority is powerless. The subject of the exorcism leapt on the seven sons of Sceva and gave them a good beating!

While Paul was still in Ephesus there was a riot which threatened the missionary cause. Demetrius the silversmith who noted that the craftsmen who made a living by making idols to Artemis their god were losing business due to many people converting to Christianity instigated it. Artemis inflamed the tempers of the crowd by suggesting that "the goddess herself will be discredited and robbed of her divine majesty."

These events seem to be a counter attack instigated, not simply by merchants, but by the Prince of this world who seems happy for any god apart from the One True God to be worshipped. The strategy was successful in terms of bringing Paul's ministry in the city to an end. We do not know whether this was something which God planned or permitted. It certainly did not adversely affect the ministry of the Church in Ephesus.

As we read the Gospels and the Book of Acts, it is clear that in both the ministry of Jesus and His apostles there was constant interaction between the natural and the supernatural. Before we close this chapter, what observations can we make?

**I would like to suggest a few.**

1. Jesus and the Apostles expected to encounter Satan and his demons during the course of their life and ministries.
2. It seems apparent that neither Jesus nor His apostles sought out demons as an aspect of their ministry.
3. They followed the leading of the Spirit and dealt with demons as a part of the presentation of the Gospel message.
4. Their motivation was to please God, NOT to seek and destroy the devil everywhere.

5. Nevertheless, they encountered the Powers regularly-

In Satan personally

When confronted by demon controlled people

When called upon to heal the sick

In the persons of practitioners of evil eg sorcerers

In the control which false religions exercised over their adherents

We have not investigated all of the information available in the Gospels and Acts about evil forces. Instead we have looked at a variety of representative samples. It is quite clear from these few examples that Jesus and His apostles recognised that Satan had been cast down to the earth with his followers as the Bible says. To them the natural and the supernatural world overlapped. This is the opposite belief from what we as Westerners are taught in our education systems and some Churches. We need to see that we in the West have been deceived for many years. Only in the recent past have we begun to rediscover the reality taught so clearly by Jesus.

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## CHAPTER 4 – Understanding the Language - ‘The Powers’

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Now that we have looked at the experience of the early Church it is time to discover what they taught as the Holy Spirit gave them understanding.

### The Language used for “the Powers”

In order to properly understand the apostle Paul, it is necessary to appreciate something of his worldview. It is not possible to separate Paul's teaching from Paul himself. Paul was a converted Jew. What did the Jews believe about the Powers?

They believed in two worlds - not matter against spirit, as in philosophy, but in two worlds of spirit, one controlling good and the other controlling evil. Evil is not just an individual matter. It arises from a real but invisible kingdom that Paul would reckon with in his teaching about the Powers. Paul understood that the world of God's Spirit is also active in influencing the lives of people; and while both these levels of spirit are real they are not equal. The ultimate overthrow of the forces of evil would prove this. (Gilliland:1983,21)

**What did the Jews believe about the Powers?**

The Jewish worldview differed widely from that of the modern Western materialist. For this very reason, Walter Wink warns us that there is a gulf fixed between us and the biblical writers which can only be bridged when -

we attend carefully to the unique vocabulary and conceptions of the first century and try to grasp what the people of that time might have meant by power, within the linguistic field of their own worldview and mythic systems. (1984,4)

Therefore, in order to provide background for more detailed study of specific passages, it is necessary to identify and define those terms by which Paul described the “Principalities and Powers”.



***The Bible classifies angels as either good or evil. The good are termed "elect" (1 Tim. 5:21) and "holy" (Matt. 25:31). They worship God and serve Him with unswerving allegiance. The evil angels include Satan, their leader (Matt. 25:41), and demons (Matt. 12:26-28). They oppose God and His servants, human and angelic. These two armies engage in a great warfare that exceeds human thought and affects the course of nations of the world."  
Dickason: 1987, 14)***

## Description of Terms

In any discussion about the Principalities and Powers it seems to be important to begin at the point of creation. Those writers who began at the point of God's creation of the angels had less difficulty than those who tried to deal with the existence of the evil forces in isolation from their origins.

Christ, the first-born of all creation, created all things which have existence, both visible and invisible (Col.1: 15,16) From his linguistic study, Walter Wink has found that the most common synonym for the word angel is "spirit". The angels were created as spiritual beings to serve God. At some time prior to mankind's lapse into sinful disobedience, some of the spirits rebelled against God. Satan and his followers were cast out from the holy presence of God, while those spirits who remained loyal continued to serve Him. Dickason summarises the situation helpfully.

The Bible classifies angels as either good or evil. The good are termed "elect" (1 Tim.5:21) and "holy" (Matt.25:31). They worship God and serve Him with unswerving allegiance. The evil angels include Satan, their leader (Matt.25: 41), and demons (Matt.12: 26-28). They oppose God and His servants, human and angelic. These two armies engage in a great warfare that exceeds human thought and affects the course of nations and the world.

This, however, is not dualism, a struggle between two eternal and equal forces. God who made all rules all. It is only by His permission and support that any creature, no matter how small or great, can survive for one moment. After He has used wicked angels, who delight to oppose Him, God will finish them. (Dickason:1987,14)

Dickason believes that these fallen spirits are to be found in four locations today.

1. In the heavenlies (Eph.6:12). Demons are Satan's henchmen seeking to hinder God's purpose and God's people.
2. In the abyss (Rev.9:1-11). Temporary confinement for certain wicked angels now and for Satan during the future kingdom for 1000 years (Rev.11:7; 17:8; 20:1-3).

3. In the earth, bound. At least four will be bound at the River Euphrates (Rev.9: 14).
4. In eternal bonds under darkness (Jude 6). They did not keep their own domain and will be released only to the Lake of Fire (Matt.25: 41). (1987:76,77)

It is those spirits in the first category which are the focus of this book.

The Bible makes it clear that some ranking of responsibilities exists within the angels who remained loyal. Dickason suggests that the evil angels also follow some hierarchical order. He advances two arguments to support his theory.

1. The significance of titles. Certain titles imply rank by their very meaning. Consider the title archangel. The etymology of it implies a rank first among angels, since ARCHE means first. This title is applied directly only to Michael (Jude 9). He, however, is also called "one of the chief princes" (Dan.10: 13). This implies that there are others of high rank, but whether they also are archangels we cannot say definitely.
2. The significance of sequence. If the order of listing implies rank (for which there is good evidence), then a comparison of the various listings seems to indicate that among what we might call governmental rulers the descending ranks are thrones, principalities, authorities, powers, world rulers, wicked spirits and angels. It may be that the last two listed are equal, wicked spirits describing evil angels. The rank of dominions is listed last in Ephesians 1:21 and second, after thrones in Colossians 1:16, so its place is more uncertain than the others. (1987:88)

Walter Wink has committed himself to an exhaustive study of the Powers. Whilst I cannot agree with some of his theories, I have found his research into the use of language for the Powers very helpful.

Wink suggests the following seven guidelines for understanding the biblical data.

1. The language of power pervades the whole New Testament. Power words usually occur in pairs and often attract each other into series or strings. The language may refer to human beings, the use and structures of authority, and fallen spirits

2. The language of power in the New Testament is imprecise, liquid, interchangeable, and unsystematic. The same author often uses the same word to mean different things. For example, Luke uses EXOUSIA in chapter 12 in reference to the "power" of Satan and to human "authorities".

3. Despite all this imprecision and interchangeability, clear patterns of usage emerge.

ARCHON -	an incumbent-in-office (without exception).
ARCHE	- the office itself, the incumbent, or the structure of power.
EXOUSIA-	the legitimations and sanctions by which power is maintained (generally abstract).
DUNAMIS-	overlaps with EXOUSIA in the area of sanctions; refers to the power or force by which rule is maintained.
KURIOTES-	the territory over which KURIOS (the master) reigns. In later usage the word means the same as KURIOS.
THRONOS-	the seat of power.
ONOMA-	a metonym in which part ("name") stands for the whole (the person), usually a person of rank.

4. Because these terms are to a degree interchangeable, one or a pair or a series can be made to represent them all. For example

Romans 8:38,39	- a series
1 Cor.15:24	- three terms
Col.2:10	- two terms
Col.2:20	- one term

5. These Powers are both heavenly and earthly, divine and human, spiritual and political, invisible and structural. The clearest statement of this is Col. 1:16, which should have been made the standard for all discussions of the Powers: "For in Him (the Son) all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones (THRONOI) or dominions (KURIOTES) or principalities (ARCHAI) or authorities (EXOUSIAI) - all things were created through Him and for Him." The parallelism of the Greek, seen clearly in the RSV, indicates that these Powers are themselves both earthly and heavenly, visible and invisible.

**“For in Him (the Son) all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones (THRONOI) or dominions (KURIOTES) or principalities (ARCHAI) or authorities (EXHOUSIAI) – all things were created through Him and for Him”. Col 1:16**

We would expect them to include human agents, social structures and systems, and also divine Powers. (1984,11)

6. These Powers are also both good and evil.

7. Unless the context further specifies, we are to take the terms for Power in their most comprehensive sense, understanding them to mean

both heavenly and earthly, divine and human, good and evil Powers.

## The Powers

Who or what are the Powers?

Here is a summary of various descriptions of terms which come under the category of the Powers.

ANGELOS - a general name for all those spirits created to serve God. Those who have remained loyal are called "elect" and "holy". Those who rebelled are called "fallen".

("Angels of the nations" - is a term meant to express the fact that there are angelic Powers behind the things of this world, including nations and rulers. Note Paul's use of Isa. 45:23 in Phil. 2:10ff (Morrison:1960,23).)

ARCHE/ON- The normal use of both terms is for human power arrangements .....ARCHE is a more abstract term for power, the pre-sociological word for the institutionalisation and continuity of power through office, position, or role, although occasionally (as in the N.T.) it is used, like ARCHON of incumbents in office. (Wink 1984,13)

EXOUSIA - The vast majority of references are to human arrangements of power, with an occasional use to designate spiritual beings. The term usually bears the sense of the right of authorisation to exercise power, or else refers to that body or person

so authorised. Legitimation comes closest to catching its meaning. (Wink:1984,15) Whitely says "The EXOUSIAI of Rom.xiii.1 seem to be the ARCHONTES of xiii.3. The word might refer to invisible rulers as in Eph.ii.2". (1964,231)

DUNAMIS - In Jewish sources of the period, DUNAMIS is most often used of military or political power or forces (a "host" or army, military might, or political clout). By extension it was applied to the angelic "army" or "host" of God. God was "Lord of the Powers" (DUNAMEON). With the exception of Rev. 13:2 and 17:12-13, the N.T. ignores the military, political, and economic uses of the term, so frequent in the LXX and Josephus, focusing instead on the spiritual dimension of power in its capacity to determine terrestrial existence for good or for evil "from above".

Consequently, we encounter the term as denoting evil spirits, the spirits of the dead, stars, spiritual powers, Godhead, and delegated authority. In the N.T., and increasingly in later Christian writers, both orthodox and gnostic, the Powers are no longer so much God's agents as God's enemies.

The "Lord of the Powers" now is engaged in a cosmic struggle to assert lordship over the Powers. (Wink:1984,17)

**In the N.T., and increasingly in later Christian writers, both orthodox and gnostic, the Powers are no longer so much God's agents as God's enemies. The "Lord of the Powers" now is engaged in a cosmic struggle to assert lordship over the Powers.**

KURIOTES - There is no evidence of pre-Christian use of the word. Its principal sense seems to be "dominion", "lordship", "ruling power"; later it blurs to become synonymous with EXOUSIA in the sense of "authority". The image is that of the realm or expanse of territory over which a KURIOS rules. (Wink:1984,20)

THRONOS - By metonymy THRONOS indicates not so much the actual seat but "a symbol of government which transcends the present occupant of the throne." (Wink:1984,18)

ONOMA - The "name" is once more a case of metonymy, the part representing the whole.... we cannot limit those named to heavenly or angelic Powers. They must include every power with a title, every

authority invested with an office, every incumbent with a role, whether divine, diabolical, or human. The term points us toward the most expansive understanding of the Powers possible. (Wink:1984,21-22)

STOICHEION - The elements or basic constituents of any substance or thing - the structures of teaching, the boundaries of a culture which cannot be transgressed with impunity. (Wink: 1989,130,131) Wink says that when these elements become idols they become functional gods and their devotees are alienated from God. (1984,77) Vanden Heuvel (1966,53-54), Morrison (1960,24), Hanson (1974,7-8), and Whitely (1964,25) all believe that the STOICHEIA in at least some passages are both the elements and the spirit powers which control the elements.

DAIMON - Evil spirits or fallen angels - the followers of Satan in His continuing rebellion against the Kingdom of God. Wink suggests that their activity in relation to the world may have one of three different manifestations.

(1) Outer personal possession - the possession of an individual by something that is alien and extrinsic to the self.

(2) Collective possession - the possession of groups or even nations by a god or demon capable of bending them as one into the service of death.

(3) Inner personal demonic - the struggle to integrate a split-off or repressed aspect that is intrinsic to the personality, an aspect that is only made evil by its rejection. (1989,43)

Wink has made a valuable contribution to our understanding of the Powers through his study of the usage of words in the New Testament. His comments about the relationship between the spiritual and the structural are very significant.

Perhaps you have enjoyed learning about the meaning of the various words used to describe The Powers in the New Testament. However, some people feel that they lose sight of the big picture in all the detail. If you are one of these, here is a brief overview to help you.

1. The Powers were all created by God. They were all good, but some have become fallen.

2. The Powers include both supernatural and natural forms. For example, both wicked spiritual rulers and temporal governors are included. You must examine each text to determine which one is being referred to. It may even be both.
3. Both rulers and the symbols and forms of government and authority are included as Powers.
4. Just as there is a hierarchy of Angelic powers, so too a hierarchy of fallen powers exists.
5. The Powers are operative as constraints within cultures, sometimes restricting the behaviour of people.
6. Demons may affect individuals, systems or groups in significant ways.



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## CHAPTER 5 – Paul’s Teaching about The Powers

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A careful study of the entire Bible is necessary to properly understand the nature of the Powers. I have chosen four key passages because they provide us with an overview of the message of the Bible on the subject.

The passages were selected with the following criteria in mind:

1. The passage must be one in which the Powers can be clearly identified as supernatural forces.
2. The passage must be a key passage for comprehension of the Scripture's teaching.

The Power passages are :-

Colossians 1:16  
Ephesians 6:12  
Colossians 2:13-15  
Ephesians 3:10

### **Colossians 1:16**

For in him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or authorities - all things were created through him and for him. (RSV)

It seems right to begin at the beginning. This passage clearly states that all things were created "in Christ". There is a parallel between this verse and John 1:4 where Christ is the divine LOGOS, the creative force between the Father and His creation. Christ is the "source of its life, the centre of all its developments, and the mainspring of all its motions." (Lightfoot: 1892,148) The Christ here referred to is not the incarnate Son but the Eternal Son who is before all creation. (Carson: 1970,42)

In Christ all things were created - in heaven and on earth. Nothing is excluded from the sphere of Christ's creative activity. "All things" refers not to all things severally but to all things collectively, probably the universes. Paul is even more specific when he refers to the sphere and

the nature of Christ's creation. He is the creator and Lord of both earth and Heaven - "the two worlds so widely separated in common thought and in the religious philosophy of the time." (Findlay:1962,9 ). He is also the creator and Lord of both visible and invisible things. Paul then proceeds to name a series of invisible things in order to emphasise the importance of Christ to Christians persuaded by the Gnostic heretics.

By their low and vague conceptions of the position of Christ, and by over exalted notions of that of angels, the Colossian errorists had all but, if not altogether, identified their powers with His. The apostle therefore, declares that the invisible beings of the worlds above us, however lofty their names or mighty their powers, are his creatures as much as the lowliest objects within our sight. (Findlay: 1962,9)

The apostle then lists the Powers under four categories; thrones, dominions, principalities and authorities. For the purpose of this study it is important to ask, "are these angelic powers, human institutions, or fallen spirits?"

Lightfoot draws attention to the parallel passage in Ephesians 1:21. From a comparison of the two passages he draws a number of conclusions.

(a) There is no significance in the sequence of names in the lists. Therefore Paul cannot be referring to a hierarchical structure in set order as the Gnostics may have expected him to do.

(b) In this catalogue Paul does not profess to describe objective realities, but contents himself with repeating subjective opinions as though he were impatient with the elaborate teachings of angelology.

(c) The primary reference in Paul's statements is to the orders of the celestial hierarchy whom the Gnostics worshipped. However the additional words in the parallel passage, "but also in that which is to come," and the phrase here, "in the heavens and on the earth," allow for a more comprehensive understanding which may include earthly rulers and authority structures and the fallen angels. (1892,152)

Christ's creative work is emphasised in this passage. Every Power was created by Christ and is therefore subject to Him. It is the task of the Church to call the Powers back to obedience to Christ, for all things were created "for Him". (1989,65)

## **Ephesians 6:12**

For we are not contending against flesh and blood, but against the Principalities, against the Powers, against the world rulers of this present darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in heavenly places. RSV.

The present reality in which the Christian lives is in stark contrast to the perfection and order of the original creation. Now there is open warfare between the Church and the Powers.

Paul makes it quite clear at the outset that the Christian is not warring against mere human instruments, but against principalities, powers, world rulers of this present darkness, and the spiritual hosts of wickedness in heavenly places. Hodge speaks for the vast majority of commentators when he says, "The signification of the terms here used, the context, and the analogy of Scripture, render it certain that the reference is to evil spirits." (1964,378) Blaikie writes -

For though all of these, evil as well as good, have been put under Christ the Head, they have not been put under the members, but the evil among them are warring against these members with all the greater ferocity that they cannot assail the Head. (1962:258)

The expression KOSMOKRATORES, rulers of the darkness of this world, was not listed in the previous linguistic survey. According to Hodge the expression means that our conflict is with the potentates who are rulers of the kingdom of darkness as it is now. (1964,379)

There is a question about the phrase "in the heavenly places." Does Paul teach that the hosts of wickedness have their residence in heavenly places, or that the heavenly places are the scene of our conflict with them? There is no support for the statement that our warfare is taking place in Heaven. Hodge asserts that the phrase means that we fight against celestial intelligences. (1964,381) "The heavenly places are where the Father has blessed us in Christ (i.3), where He seated Christ at His own right hand (i.20), and has in some sense seated us with Christ (ii.6)". (Findlay:1891-92,407) Blaikie suggests that this is an allusion to the spiritual experience of God's people: in spirit they are at the gate of

heaven ...where they are subject to the attacks of the spirits of wickedness. (1962:259)

It is precisely because the enemy has celestial intelligence that the Christian is commanded to be prepared with the whole armour of God.

**It is precisely because the enemy has celestial intelligence that the Christian is commanded to be prepared with the whole armor of God.**

### **Colossians 2:13-15**

And you, who were dead in trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, having cancelled the bond which stood against us with its legal demands; this he set aside, nailing it to the cross. He disarmed the Principalities and Powers and made a public example of them, triumphing over them in him. RSV

Wink points out that this passage raises at least three difficult problems - the meaning of the word bond or written code, (CHEIROGRAPHON), the use of the image of triumph, and the translation of APEKDYSAMENOS.

### **What is meant by the "written code"? (CHEIROGRAPHON)**

It has been suggested that Paul may have been referring to some local custom in Asia Minor in which penitent offenders in a holy cult wrote their confessions on stone steles as a public record of their misdeeds. However the metaphor breaks down at the point at which the "written code" is said to be nailed to the cross, as it would not be possible to nail a stone to the cross.

Lightfoot indicates the simple meaning of the word translated "written code" is an autograph of any kind. The CHEIROGRAPHON was normally a handwritten admission of indebtedness common in the Latin, Greek and Jewish worlds. In the case of the Jewish people, it may be said that they signed a contract when they bound themselves by a curse to observe all the Law (Deut.27:14-26). The repetition of the pronoun "us" seems to include the Gentiles in the statement of indebtedness. In their case the "written code" is the moral assent of their conscience to the fact that they

too have failed to fully live up to the light given to them (Rom.2: 14-15) (1892,185).

The written code has been "crossed out". Wink refers to the legal procedure by which charges written on the CHEIROGRAPHON were literally cancelled by the Greek cross - letter X (CHI). (1989,56) The implication is that a charge which once stood against all sinners has been erased and the document torn up and cast aside.

### **What is implied by the use of the image of triumph?**

Wink indicates that the meaning of THRIAMBEUSAS is not "to gain triumph" but "to celebrate a triumph". It could be referring to (a) the Powers as captives, (b) the convert as freed, or (c) Christians as Christ's soldiers as in 2 Cor.2:14. The last possibility is excluded because of the reference to the Powers. The meaning here is "to lead them" (the Powers) as a conquered enemy in a victory parade so as to expose them to ridicule. (Both APEKDYSAMENOS and the verb DEIGMATIZO carry this sense as does the phrase EN PARRESIA, with openness, in verse 15.) (1989:56)

**The meaning of the phrase translated "triumphing over them" is that God in Christ has captured the Powers and has exposed them to public ridicule by leading them in His victory procession.**

The meaning of the phrase translated "triumphing over them" is that God in Christ has captured the Powers and has exposed them to public ridicule by leading them in his victory procession

The most difficult question remains, "What was achieved by disarming the Powers"? Is this victory past or future tense? In what sense does disarming the Powers benefit the Christian today?

#### **What was achieved by disarming the powers?**

Through Christ's victory the Powers have been exposed and put to shame. The word "disarmed" (APEKDYO) carries the same sense, "to undress, to strip off". If the Powers are taken as the natural object of "disarmed" (APEKDYSAMENOS), then God in Christ has stripped, disarmed, unmasked, and exposed them through the cross. It seems preferable to understand the sense of APEKDYSAMENOS in this way rather than following Lightfoot's explanation which translates the

middle voice "stripping himself of the evil powers". (1892,189)

What Paul states here in past tense is seen to lie in the future in 1 Corinthians 15:20-28. Wink states that the Powers were just as strong after the cross as before and that the final conquest lies in the future. He asserts that this is part of the mystery - the already but not yet; Christ is Lord and Christ will be Lord, teaching of the New Testament. (1989,61)

The question is resolved when the context is examined. In the following verses Paul pleads with the Colossians to apply the liberty which God in Christ has given to them. They have experienced liberation from the Powers in the present but will continue until the end to be assaulted by them. (Wink 1989,61)

### **Ephesians 3:10**

That through the Church the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known to the Principalities and Powers in the heavenly places. RSV

The Church's task is articulated here as preaching to the Powers. It is not only engaged in a kind of spiritual warfare, but is also engaged in a mission that carries the truth of the Gospel into the very heart of power and expects some result. (Wink 1989,89)

The verse above raises two important questions; where are the "heavenly places", and how is the church to have access to the Powers there?

The letter to the Ephesian Christians contains five references to "heavenly places" (TA EPOURANIA). There is no reason to suggest that they do not have a common meaning. The first three references relate to Christ and/or the Christian. Here the phrase refers to that sphere in which Christians, with one foot in each of two worlds, experience the risen life in Christ. The final two references include the Powers within the same sphere. Wink says by way of definition -

We must think of the "heavenlies" as a dimension of reality into which believers have already while on earth been admitted, yet in which unredeemed Powers still exercise dominion and must be

fought with, preached to, and made to know the manifold wisdom of God. (1989,89)

In order to understand the significance of this statement, it is first necessary to realise that spatial terms are irrelevant at this point. It is not that earth is here and heaven is somewhere else. The author of Ephesians sees Christian existence as encompassing two times and two realms, all of them coextensive with the present world. The two times are the old age and the new; the two realms are the earthly and the heavenly. The times, as he conceived them virtually overlapped, since the last things had already begun to happen. "The realms, too, largely interpenetrated one another". (Wink 1989,90)

Wink expresses the view that the phrase "in the heavenlies" is very similar in meaning to "the kingdom of God" as it is used in the Gospels. (1989,93). The following quote from Wink reveals the heart of the matter.

"The heavenlies", in short, is that dimension of reality of which the believer becomes aware as a result of being "raised up" by God with Christ. It is a heightened awareness, the consciousness of a noumenal realm in which the final contest for the lordship of all reality is being waged. The "sons of disobedience" are "dead" to the reality. It is known only by revelation..... And the consequence of revelation, conversely, is not to rescue the believers from a world of evil but to open their eyes, to bring them "light" (Eph.5: 14) and thereby enlist them in the struggle for liberation....."The heavenlies".....is thus a kind of "liberated zone" although with this caveat: those who are in this "liberated zone" are not at all free from the possibility of collusion with the old Powers. (1989,92-93)

In what sense, then, is the Church to preach to the Powers? The context of Paul's discussion is the opening up of salvation to the peoples of the world. Paul makes it clear that the once heathen people who are now in the Church were once the captives of the rulers (ARCHAI) and the authorities (EXOUSIAI). The fact that they are now free, demonstrates that these Powers have been placed under Christ's feet. The dominion has been broken. As Wink says -

It remains the church's task not only to proclaim to people that they have been redeemed from the darkness that once held them in bondage (5:8-14), but also to proclaim to the Powers that they are not supreme... That those human beings under their dominion (here

the concept of national angels comes immediately to mind) belong to Christ..... The church does not exercise the power of the Powers, however. It has no hope of success in a frontal encounter. That is why the writer ends this paragraph celebrating the "boldness and confidence of access through our faith in him." (Eph.3:12) 1989,94)

**God has dealt with the Powers at the cross and has promised the culmination of His triumph in the future.**

### **What have we learned?**

1. All the Powers were created by Christ and are intended to fulfil His purposes. Although all were created good, some fell through disobedience.
2. The Powers include the holy angels, the fallen angels, earthly rulers and all authority structures. Many New Testament references are comprehensive, but in each case the meaning of the Powers is to be determined within the immediate context.
3. The Powers are at war against the Church because the Church represents God's reign on the earth. The location of this war is in "the heavenly places" which is that realm into which every Christian is raised up with Christ.
4. God in Christ has dealt with the Powers at the cross and has promised the culmination of His triumph in the future.



5. God accomplished His victory in Christ in two ways. Firstly, by cancelling the bond held against all sinners He satisfied the legal demands of His own justice and left no legal grounds on which the Powers could appeal against the Christians. Secondly, in Christ's atoning death, God defeated the Powers, exposing them to the shame of the vanquished.
6. As a result of God's victory in Christ, all Christians are liberated from their bondage to the Powers and are called forth to exercise their liberty and to withstand the assaults of the Powers.
7. Having been raised up with Christ, Christians live and fight in the heavenly realms. They are joint citizens of two worlds, the one that is and the one that is to come. In the heavenlies they will receive revelations through which they will come to understand the roles and strategies of the Powers and they will learn how to defeat the Powers through faith in God. The task of the Church now is to bind the Powers so that their captive peoples may be released and recruited as participants in Christ's war of liberation.
8. The Church is to have a role (as God's representative) in addressing the problem of the rebellion of the Powers here on earth.

It seems clear that the Church has a great responsibility to come to understand and practice the principles of ministry and liberation set out in the above passages. Somehow, the Gospel is hindered in many situations and in some entire people groups. Could it be that the Church has failed to address the Powers involved? There are some important implications for the ministry of the Church which can be drawn from the conclusions listed above.

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## **CHAPTER 6 - Addressing the Powers in the course of our ministry**

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The Bible makes it quite clear that our world is a battleground where Satan and his forces are fighting a last ditch and futile battle against the reign of King Jesus. We have learned from previous chapters that Satan is not present everywhere as God is. Satan is a supernatural being, but he is a creation of God. He is NOT a god.

Because Satan cannot be everywhere at once, he rules through various structures of power in which he delegates authority to other fallen angels. Other powers which cooperate either ignorantly or intentionally with Satan are human and systemic.

Satan's aim is to maintain control of this world. This is his kingdom - for a time. His authority and his influence are limited. The cross has been his downfall.

God is at work in the world bringing love and salvation to people who were once Satan's subjects. One day every knee will bow to Jesus. This includes every fallen power.

### **Why do we have problems believing?**

I believe that many Western Christians remain unaware of Satan's forces and strategies because they have been blinded by the typical Western scientific worldview. We have been educated to believe that there is no interaction between our life experience and the spiritual world. In effect, we have been trained to be agnostics.

God will not allow us to remain ignorant of the truth. We need to remove the lenses put in place by our education systems and develop a world view which is truly Biblical.

When God opens our eyes to the reality of the spiritual world all around us we will live and minister differently.

I read an interesting article this week. It was called " How to get your Church on a wartime footing in a day of peace." This is exactly what pastors everywhere are called to do. This means different things to leaders in different sections of the Church. There have been more books written on the subject of spiritual warfare in the past decade than in any other period of the Church's history. Leaders have attended conferences and people have watched many videos. We are certainly the most informed generation in the Western world. We need to be, because our young people are more aware and involved in occult practices than ever before.

## **How can we minister confidently to The Powers?**

We should keep in our minds at all times the example of Jesus and the Apostles. When we briefly looked at their ministries in Chapter 3 we noted some important guidelines.

1. Jesus and the Apostles expected to encounter Satan and his demons during the course of their ministries.
2. It seems apparent that neither Jesus nor His apostles sought out demons as primary focus of their ministry.
3. They followed the leading of the Spirit and dealt with demons as a part of the presentation of the Gospel message and the accompanying display of God's love for suffering people.
4. Their motivation was to please God, NOT to seek and destroy the devil everywhere.
5. Nevertheless, they encountered the Powers regularly-

In Satan personally

When confronted by demon controlled people

When called upon to heal the sick

In the persons of practitioners of evil eg sorcerers

In the control which false religions exercised over their adherents

## **Do Territorial Spirits exist?**

Peter Wagner, in a paper called "Territorial spirits and world missions," quotes Timothy Warner of Trinity Evangelical Divinity School who says,

I have come to believe that Satan does indeed assign a demon or corps of demons to every geopolitical unit in the world, and that they are among the Principalities and Powers against whom we wrestle. (1989,278)

Wagner went on to say that as the subject was relatively new in 1989, there was no consensus of opinion. Peter Wagner has subsequently stated that territorial spirits are operative in maintaining Satan's control over peoples and regions.

In one way, I feel that it is purely an academic exercise and hardly worth arguing about. Apart from the reference in Daniel to the "Prince of Persia," which certainly refers to a fallen controlling angel over the nation of Persia, the Bible is not explicit. Where the Bible is not explicit, we cannot be dogmatic.

The word studies included in chapter 3 indicate clearly that spiritual forces are operative in systems, governments and cultures throughout our fallen world. This indicates that it is likely that systems exercising power may have become demonised in some way.

## **Is there value in Spiritual mapping?**

Spiritual mapping is an exercise in which Christians seek to understand their community in terms of the location of occult activities, criminal acts, spiritual power bases, evidence of systemic sin and social upheaval.

By gaining a clearer understanding of the symptoms and causes of evil in a community, the Church can then pray and address needs through bringing love and light.

How can we gain accurate information to ascertain the spiritual pulse of our community?

First and foremost, we must follow the example of Jesus and live lives focused on pleasing the Father. Then we need to have our minds alert to the reality of spiritual powers. As we are led by the Spirit into power

**Follow the example of Jesus...live lives focused on pleasing the Father.**

confrontations He will direct us into the way of victory.

Secondly, it is helpful to understand the community in a social sense.

- Are there areas where crime is a great problem – why?
- Are there indications of occult practices in the schools and the wider community?
- Are there spiritual practitioners advertising in the local paper?
- Are there temples to false religions in the community?
- What has been the history of indigenous/ European relations in the community?
- Are there patterns of unhealthy behaviours occurring in the community and Churches?
- What has been the history of your Church thus far?
- What are the barriers to the Gospel in your community?

Securing this information is the first step. Once you have a clear mental map of your community, it is essential to begin to pray and seek the Spirit's leading about how to proceed.

Prayer walking problem areas and praying for God's blessing to come down is a good strategy as long as it is safe.

Long ago, I read the story of James O Fraser, a pioneer missionary to the Lisu tribe of South-west China. After five years of sacrifice and prayer he had little to show for his great devotion. He was discouraged in his work and had almost reached the point of desperation in his own inner experience.

A praying friend sent Fraser a cutting from a magazine which brought him understanding and victory. Here is his testimony.

The passive side of leaving everything to the Lord Jesus as our life, while blessedly true, was not all that was needed just then. We need different truth at different times. Definite resistance on the ground of the cross was what brought me light, for I found that it worked. *I found that I could have victory in the spiritual realm whenever I wanted it.*

History records that the longed for blessing was poured out upon Fraser's beloved people, first a trickle, then a mighty torrent.

Fraser was frustrated and ineffective until he learned that God wanted him to be pro- active in dealing with the Powers. He knew his community. He knew the needs of his people. But he needed to learn how to break through the spiritual barriers which kept the people in bondage to Satan.

### **What had Fraser learnt?**

1. Jesus delegated His authority to ALL His disciples for ALL time and for ALL situations. Read Luke 10:17-20 for timely encouragement and a warning.

**We have His  
authority!**

We need to know the reality of living under the authority of Jesus and speaking and acting with the authority of Jesus. At the entrance to the temple, Peter said to the lame man, "In the Name of Jesus of Nazareth, rise up and walk!" The man was healed and went away walking, leaping and praising God. It requires no less authority to say to a demon, "In the Name of Jesus come out of him."

Our present crisis may not be a crisis of understanding but a crisis of confidence. This confidence grows as we come to know the Lord more intimately and recognise His promptings. After all, we should only speak in His name if we are certain that it is His will to do so.

2. Jesus has defeated Satan and all the Powers by His death and resurrection. Read Colossians 2:13-15. Our confidence stems not only from hearing the voice of the Holy Spirit, but also from the knowledge that Satan has been disarmed at the cross. It is good to read verses such as these before becoming involved in warfare praying.

3. We are to put on all the whole armour of God as Ephesians 10 ff says. This means we are to ensure that we are complete in Christ and dependant upon Christ in this battle. The fiery darts of the wicked one will come and our only defence lies in the armour of God.

4. Jesus taught us to bind the strong man in order to plunder his house. Read Matthew 12:28,29. We are concerned to bind the evil one and to free his captives. The power of prayer and the power of the Gospel are both required.

Just as Jesus and the Apostles spoke directly to the demons, so we speak in Jesus authority and command them to leave the person or the situation. The Holy Spirit reveals the identity and function of the Powers in order that we might first bind them and then provide remedial ministry.

If the power is reluctant to obey Christ, it is likely that it has some legal ground for being there. It is then necessary to find out what the legal ground is and remove it. This often involves confession of sin and reconciliation of hurting parties before the demon will leave.

5. Victory lies in the Blood of the Lamb. Revelation tells us of a great war in which the Dragon was defeated. What were the means of his defeat?

They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony. They did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death. (verse 11)

**The blood of the Lamb.** When we pray against the Powers, we must first ask for the protection of the blood to be upon ourselves and all those who are close to us. As we command the Powers, they must obey because of the blood of the cross (where they were defeated) and the authority that is in the Name of the Lord Jesus.

Satan cannot stand an exposition of the blood of Christ. He turns pale at every view of Calvary. The flowing wounds are the signal of his retreat. A heart besprinkled with the blood is holy ground on which he dares not tread. - E M Bounds

**The word of our testimony.** This is linked to the sword of the Spirit. We overcome the Powers by the blood of the lamb. We liberate the captives by the word of our testimony- especially the Gospel.

A clear ringing testimony to the power of the blood he fears more than an attack of a legion of archangels. - E M Bounds

**The martyr spirit.** They did not allow threats to their personal safety to place barriers on their loving obedience to Christ. Obedience is the key issue.

6. Dealing with people who have been demonised. If someone has been demonised eg Luke 4:31-36 the issue is neither oppression nor possession. The issue is control over an area of the person's life.

All non-Christians are affected to some degree. (Galatians 4:8,9) In order to become demonised one of two things must happen.

- it is first necessary to give consent to a demon, or
- demonisation can be due to a curse, a pre-birth factor, or molestation.

How can a case of demonisation be diagnosed? It is primarily a matter of Divine revelation but after some time, we learn to identify symptoms and patterns. I have found it helpful to ask myself these questions:

- Is it the self life?
- Is it some psychological disorder?
- Is there an area in which this person's life is out of control?

In the last instance, demonisation is a possibility.

If you (the leader) have become demonised, look for others who may have been influenced by you.

## **A Final Word**

Our world is broken, fallen and under the domination of beings who were considered unfit to remain in God's Heavenly Kingdom. God is determined that this situation will not prevent any human being from enjoying His love and coming home to live with Him. He sent His Son to save us. In Christ's death and resurrection lies the power to conquer the Powers themselves.

He has delegated His own Divine authority to the Church to preach the Gospel, heal the sick and cast out evil spirits just as Jesus did. We have been commissioned to bring God's love to every person in every place on the planet.

The victory belongs to Jesus!

When the thousands years are over, Satan will be released from prison and will go out to deceive the nations in the four corners of the earth... In number they are like the sand on the sea shore. They marched across the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of God's people, the city he loves. But fire came down from Heaven and devoured them. And the



devil, who deceived them, was thrown into the lake of burning sulphur, where the beast and the false prophet had been thrown. They will be tormented day and night for ever and ever. (Rev. 20:7-10)

**"And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Now the dwelling place of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be His people, and God Himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away." (Rev:21:3-4)**

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