

Spiritual Warfare

Part 3

Introduction

In Parts 1 and 2 of Spiritual Warfare, we learned that we are soldiers in the Lord's army. Our job—to enforce the victory Jesus won over Satan when he died on the cross. In order to prepare us for our part in the battle, Jesus has delegated His authority to us and given us powerful weapons to fight with.

In Part 3 we will look at some important principles of spiritual warfare and at examples of warfare taken from the Old Testament to see how they apply to our spiritual warfare today.

Our Study

PRINCIPLE #1: The battle is the Lord's

The Old Testament story of King Jehoshaphat of Judah has much to teach us.

The Scripture: 2 Chronicles 20:2, 3

"Some men came and told Jehoshaphat. 'A vast army is coming against you'...Alarmed, Jehoshaphat resolved to inquire of the Lord, and he proclaimed a fast for all of Judah."

1. When King Jehoshaphat heard the bad news what two things did he do? _____

The people of Judah, including women and children came from every town. Jehoshaphat stood before them at the temple in Jerusalem and prayed. In his prayer he reminded God of His power and how the people of Judah believed that He would save them. He also declared Judah's own helplessness in the present situation.

The Spirit of the Lord came upon one of the Levites and he began to prophesy.

The Scripture: 2 Chronicles 20:15-17

"He said,...'This is what the Lord says to you: "Do not be afraid or discouraged because of this vast army. For the battle is not yours, but God's....You will not have to fight this battle. Take up your positions; stand firm and see the deliverance the Lord will give you....Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged.'"

2. What did the Lord tell them? _____

The Scripture: 2 Chronicles 20: 18, 19

"Jehoshaphat bowed with his face to the ground, and all the people of Judah and Jerusalem fell down in worship....Then some Levites...stood up and praised the Lord, the God of Israel, with very loud voice."

3. When the people heard the good news, what did they do? _____

The next morning, Jehoshaphat led the people to the position directed by the Lord and encouraged them.

The Scripture: 2 Chronicles 20:20, 21

"Have faith in the Lord your God and you will be upheld; have faith in His prophets and you will be successful"....Jehoshaphat appointed men to sing to the Lord and praise Him...as they went out at the head of the army."

4. What did Jehoshaphat tell his people? _____

5. What did he do? _____

6. Where were they stationed? _____

What amazing faith! The praisers and the singers marched out before the fighting men.

The Scripture: 2 Chronicles 20:22, 23

"As they begin to sing and praise, the Lord set ambushes against the men of Ammon and Moab and Mount Seir who were invading Judah, and they were defeated. The men of Ammon and Moab rose up against the men from Mount Seir to destroy and annihilate them. After they finished slaughtering the men from Seir, they helped to destroy one another."

7. What happened when the men began to sing and praise? _____

The Scripture: 2 Chronicles 20: 24-26

"When the men of Judah...looked toward the vast army, they saw only dead bodies lying on the ground; no one had escaped. So Jehoshaphat and his men went to carry off their plunder....There was so much plunder that it took three days to collect it. On the fourth day they assembled in the Valley of Beracah, where they praised the Lord."

8. What did the men of Judah see? _____

9. How long did it take them to carry away the plunder? _____

10. What did they do afterwards? _____

The Scripture: 2 Chronicles 20:27, 28

"Then, led by Jehoshaphat, all the men of Judah and Jerusalem returned joyfully to Jerusalem....They entered Jerusalem and went to the temple of the Lord with harps and lutes and trumpets."

11. What did they do next? _____

The Scripture: 2 Chronicles 20:29, 30

"The fear of the Lord came upon all the kingdoms of the countries when they heard how the Lord had fought against the enemies of Israel. And the kingdom of Jehoshaphat was at peace."

12. What was the final result? _____

Yes, when we trust the Lord, follow His lead, and use the armor and spiritual weapons He has given us, a glorious victory awaits us.

PRINCIPLE #2: Although the battle is actually fought in the heavenlies, what we do on earth has powerful influence

What a strange way to fight a war! Once again, we must remember that we are not called upon to fight a natural war, but a spiritual war. In this war we are to use spiritual weapons. Looking back over the story of King Jehoshaphat, let's review some of the things Jehoshaphat and his army did.

13. List some of the things they did. _____

PRINCIPLE #3: Our praise enthrones God

Let's take a special look at praise. Throughout the Bible we find God's people praising Him by shouting, singing, crying, by laughter, speaking in tongues, clapping, using musical instruments, by dancing, leaping, bowing down, kneeling, and lifting of hands.

Why so many different forms of praise? What's so special about praise?

The Scripture: Psalm 22:3 (NKJV)

"But You are holy, who inhabit the praises of Israel."

14. What does God do? _____

Some versions of the Bible translate the word inhabit as "enthrone." In other words, our praises place God on a throne, exalt Him to a position where He can better act on our behalf. Praise, accompanied by worship, is one of our most important spiritual weapons.

Let's remind ourselves of another important principle of spiritual warfare.

PRINCIPLE #4:

A vast spiritual army is fighting in the heavenlies where the real battle takes place

The Scripture: Ephesians 6:12

"Our struggle is...in the heavenly realms."

15. Where does spiritual warfare take place? _____

The Bible gives us some insight into this in the book of Daniel. The prophet Daniel had been praying for three weeks, but nothing had happened. Then an angel appeared.

The Scripture: Daniel 10:12-14

"Do not be afraid, Daniel. Since the first day that you set your mind to gain understanding and to humble yourself before your God, your words were heard, and I have come in response to them. But the prince of the Persian kingdom resisted me twenty-one days. Then Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me...Now I have come to explain to you what will happen to your people in the future."

16. When had Daniel's prayers first been heard? _____

17. Why had the angel not come sooner? _____

This prince was one of Satan's mighty angels or demons.

18. What happened eventually? _____

You will remember from previous lessons that Michael leads Christ's army. This scripture explains why the answers to our prayers are sometimes delayed.

Another scene from the Old Testament gives us a glimpse into this spiritual army of God.

The Scripture: 2 Kings 6:15-17

"When the servant of the man of God got up and went out early the next morning, an army with horses and chariots had surrounded the city. 'Oh, my lord, what shall we do?' the servant asked. 'Don't be afraid,' the prophet answered. 'Those who are with us are more than those who are with them.' And Elisha prayed, 'O Lord, open his eyes so he may see.' Then the Lord opened the servant's eyes, and he looked and saw the hills full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha."

19. What did the servant call Elisha's attention to? _____

20. What was Elisha's answer? _____

21. After Elisha prayed, what did the servant see? _____

For a brief moment Elisha's servant was able to see what his master had already seen in the spirit—a great spiritual army which was far greater than the earthly army surrounding the city. What a wonderful picture for us to keep in mind as we enter into battles that seem impossible for us to win—those who are with us are more than those who are with them.

PRINCIPLE #5:

Spiritual warfare does not always make sense to the natural mind.

In spiritual warfare we are sometimes called to do things that don't make sense to us. We may never know what happens during spiritual warfare this side of heaven, but what we see is only a small part of what is actually going on, and obedience to seemingly foolish commands can play an important role in our warfare.

Could ever a people be given a more "foolish" set of instructions than those given to the Israelites in the taking of Jericho? After the Lord had brought the Israelites out of Egypt, after their spending forty years in the wilderness, and after the death of Moses, the Lord brought his people to the edge of the Promised Land which he had promised would be theirs. When they reached the city of Jericho, he promised them he would deliver Jericho into their hands.

The Scripture: Joshua 6:3-5

"March around the city once with all the armed men. Do this for six days. Have seven priests carry trumpets of rams' horns in front of the ark. On the seventh day march around the city seven times, with the priests blowing the trumpets. When you hear them sound a long blast on the trumpets, have all the people give a loud shout; then the walls of the city will collapse and the people will go up, every man straight in."

22. What were the people commanded to do? _____

23. What would happen next? _____

When Joshua and the Israelites followed the Lord's instructions, the walls did fall down and Jericho fell into their hands.

In the history of the Israelites, we have occasion after occasion when the instructions for fighting did not seem to make sense in the natural but resulted in victory for the Israelites: In their fight against the Amalikites, Moses was told to stand at the top of a hill, his arms raised, with the staff of God in his hand while Joshua and his troops fought the physical battle. As long as Moses raised the staff of God, the Israelites prevailed. In the capture of the city of Ai, Joshua was told to hold his javelin out toward the city while his men battled. Ai fell into their hands.

Gideon was told to fight the Midianites with an army reduced to 300 men. Their weapons? Trumpets and empty jars with torches inside. When the men blew their trumpets, broke the jars, and cried, "A sword for the Lord and for Gideon," the enemy troops fought against themselves and fled.

Again and again, although the strategy differed, we see God instructing the earthly armies in ways that seem strange to us but result in victory. When we put our entire faith in the Lord and are obedient to his military strategy even though we don't understand it, then the Lord will do battle for us.

As soldiers in the Lord's army, we have been given the job of enforcing Christ's victory on earth. While Jesus and his heavenly forces battle in the heavenlies, let us fight our battle with confidence, knowing we have the Lord's authority and the powerful weapons He has issued to us.

The Answers

1. Inquired of the Lord; proclaimed a fast for all of Judah
2. Not to be afraid or discouraged, the battle wasn't theirs but God's; they wouldn't have to fight but they should take up their positions and see the Lord's deliverance
3. Worshipped the Lord; the Levites praised the Lord loudly
4. To have faith in God and His prophets and they would be upheld and successful
5. Appointed men to sing and praise the Lord
6. At the head of the army
7. The Lord set ambushes and the enemy troops completely destroyed one another.
8. Only dead bodies
9. Three days
10. Assembled and praised the Lord
11. Returned joyfully to Jerusalem and went to the temple to praise God with musical instruments
12. Peace
13. Fasted, sought the Lord, reminded the Lord of the past and his promises to save them, prophesied, worshipped, praised, encouraged, sang, praised with musical instruments
14. Inhabits our praises
15. In the heavenly realms
16. The first day he prayed
17. He was detained for twenty-one days by the prince of the Persian kingdom.
18. Michael came to help him.
19. An army of horses and chariots surrounding the city
20. *"Those who are with us are more than those who are with them."*
21. The hills full of horses and chariots of fire
22. March around the city once a day for six days; on the seventh day, seven times with the priests blowing their trumpets; give a loud shout
23. The walls would fall down

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