



Cherreguine Bible Doctrine Ministries
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Spiritual Warfare

As finite beings we possess all kinds of human limitations. The truth of this fact is evident in every area of life, but none so crystal clear as in our conflict with the demonic realm and with the false doctrine, the distortions and the outright lies which flow from it.

We are pitted against an enemy superior to us in wisdom, in strength, in power and in numbers.

Ephesians 6:12 is a reconnaissance report that comes down from the Commander-in-Chief, the Lord Jesus Christ, to the Four-star General of the 1st century, the Apostle Paul, and then to every officer, sergeant and PFC in the ranks of the Royal Battalion. It tells us, that "...our struggle [our combat, our warfare] is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual {forces} of wickedness in the heavenly {places,}" all of whom, by the way, are under the authority of the Prince of Darkness.

We have to understand that on the Cross Jesus Christ won the Strategic Victory of the AC. This means that the tide of war has turned.

Colossians 2:15 tells us that when God "...had disarmed the rulers and authorities, He made a public display of them, having triumphed over them through Him," that is, through His Son.

When God sent His Son into the world, He paid the ultimate penalty for our sins. In essence, He broke the back of the devil at the Cross. The prophecy of Genesis 3:15 states that the "seed of the woman" would one day crush the head of the serpent, of Satan.

Christ broke open, by His work of redemption, Satan's POW camp called the "world." By redeeming us from the slave market of sin and placing us in the freedom of grace He simultaneously rescued us "...from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son," in whom Paul says in Colossians 1:14, "...we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins."

In Hebrews 2:14-15 we learn that Jesus Christ partook of flesh and blood, in order that through His spiritual death "...He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil; and might deliver those who through fear of death were subject to slavery all their lives." 1 John 3:8 puts it this way, "...The Son of God appeared for this purpose, that He might destroy the works of the devil."

a. But while all these things are spiritual realities, the war is not over and you and I are still on the battlefield. Whether we as individuals win the tactical victory will depend on whether we can apply to our lives the things gained through Christ's Strategic Victory.

If we want to win day by day, we have to utilize the assets that God has provided for us in the Word. Without a clear, accurate understanding of the Word, it is impossible for any believer to stand up to the strategy of Satan.

b. When the Apostle John talks about those who are “overcomers,” he uses a military term. The Greek verb *nikao* (nikao) refers to peace achieved by military victory. What does it mean to “overcome the world”? It means to have peace through victory. John is talking about the spiritual peace that comes through spiritual victory.

In v. 4 he makes a declaration of fact. The neuter “whatever” states a comprehensive, categorical principle-- whatever is “born of God” is victorious over the world. Period.

Principle: The realm of flesh is always conquered by the realm of the Spirit.

“Born” here is the perf. pass. part. of *gennaō*- ‘beget, generate.’ Being “born of God,” or “from God,” refers not to physical, but to spiritual birth, and that spiritual birth is the HS’s work of regeneration.

i. The perfect tense means that at the very moment we believed in Christ the HS accomplished our regeneration.

It also means that the results of regeneration-- that we now have a human spirit, that God the Father has imputed His eternal life to our human spirit, and that being spiritually alive we are children of God and as such have relationship with Him-- these carry on not only through the present but on throughout eternity. Illustrate the principle of regeneration in the perfect tense.

ii. The passive voice indicates that the believer receives regeneration, that he is the recipient of this spiritual birth and this partaking of the divine nature. It emphasizes that he cannot earn it, he does not deserve it, and there is nothing he could ever do to accomplish it. Regeneration is a provision of the grace of God, one of the 51 things God does for us at the moment of salvation.

c. “Overcomes” is the pres. act. ind. of *nikao*. The pres. act. ind. pictures continuous victory in an ongoing struggle-- “whatever is born of God-- through regeneration-- keeps on constantly overcoming the world.” The key to this victory is “our faith,” which John says, “has overcome” the world! This time *nikao* is an aor. part.. Now here’s where grammar becomes crucial. The aorist tense refers to something that takes place at a point in time, punctiliar *aktionsart*. In Greek the action of the aorist participle always precedes the action of the main verb.

What this means is that the momentary victory of faith in Christ-- for salvation-- provides the basis for an ongoing victory in the life of faith. What’s the point here? Well, there are two of them actually. First of all, salvation is the once-and-for-all victory; spirituality is the ongoing victory. And secondly, to be overcomers means that we live in a realm of peace-- not an external, but an internal realm.

d. John’s two-fold development here is much like Christ’s invitation in Matthew 11. When the Lord in Matthew 11:28-30 offered to the disciples-- and to us as believers-- peace as a birthright; He was offering both peace with God and personal rest of soul. In the passage He talks about two different kinds of rest. One is the rest that Jesus gives-- “Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest.” The other is a rest we find-- “Take My yoke upon you, and learn from Me... and you shall find rest for your souls.” The “rest” that He

gives to all who come to Him in faith and the “rest” that we find through study of the Word are two different things. One is a rest of position; the other is a rest of practice. One is a rest that is eternal; the other is a rest that is experiential.

e. One of the reasons Satan hates us so much is that in our position “in Christ” we are higher than the angels. Ephesians 1:3 says, “Blessed {be} the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly {places} in Christ;” and in Colossians 3:1 Paul said, “If then you have been raised up with Christ [1st cl. cond., ‘and you have’], keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God.”

Not only is He “seated at the right hand of God,” which is a picture of the eternal Victory He won on Calvary’s Cross, but we are seated there with Him.

All the things Satan tried to achieve through his arrogance and rebellion are given to us when we believe in Christ. If he can’t keep us from accepting eternal life, he will at least do everything he possibly can to keep us from enjoying the extravagant riches of God’s grace while we’re here on earth.

f. But we can overcome the enemy; we can share in Christ’s victory over Satan day by day, by remembering His triumph. By celebrating His victory and living every single moment of every day in the light of His Cross and what it means to each of us.

When John uses the pres. act. participles of the words “overcomes” and “believes” in 1 John 5:5, he’s telling us that the one who chooses to keep on believing is the one who will keep on overcoming the world, with all its false priorities and distractions.

g. Faith, exercised moment by moment, brings spiritual victory, which brings peace to the soul. But that faith must always be in the Person and Work of Jesus Christ. What I mean by that is this-- If we lose sight today of the Eternal Victory of Jesus Christ on the Cross; if we do not apply today the meaning of the Cross to our lives, then we will not have inner peace and the enemy will have won another round in the tactical war.

Principle: All victory is found in Jesus Christ. The Apostle Paul spoke of experiential victory in the circumstances of life in Romans 8, even though we may be surrounded by tribulation, distress, persecution, famine, nakedness, peril, or violent death at the hands of our persecutors. He said, “...in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us,” Romans 8:37. In 2 Corinthians 2:14 he wrote, “But thanks be to God, who always leads us in His triumph in Christ, and manifests through us the sweet aroma of the knowledge of Him in every place.”

h. Understand that if you are a member of the Royal Family, a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, then you are part of a victory which can never be erased; you have something which all the allied forces of evil in this universe can never take away from you-- the gift of eternal life and a destiny in the Son of God. According to Romans 8:17 you are a “joint-heir” of the greatest king and the wealthiest ruler who has ever existed or ever will exist, and that is something that nothing can destroy and no one can ever take from you.

i. The realization of this, and the application of it to life, especially in the midst of tremendous adversity, should cause us to rejoice exceedingly. The theme of Paul’s letter to the Philippians is one thing-- the “joy” of our victory in Christ, and the foundation that victory provides in the Spiritual Life.

Paul uses the word “joy” 7 times, and the terms “rejoice” or “rejoiced,” past tense, 9 times. In Philippians 4:4 Paul commands the Church, to “Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice!” “Joy” is from the noun chara (spelled out); “rejoice” is from the verb chairō. Chairō was used in the ancient world for the celebration of a military victory on the battlefield. In experiential application it means this- celebrate the victory of grace. At the Cross Jesus Christ won the ultimate victory, the eternal victory, what we call the Strategic Victory of the AC. He broke the back of Satan at the Cross, and He broke open the gates of Satan’s POW camp-- the CS. If you have believed in Him then you have relationship with Christ forever, and if you have relationship with the Son then you have relationship with the Father, and in that relationship you have power, privilege and opportunity greater than anything you can even imagine.

ii. How often do we give thanks for the Strategic Victory of Jesus Christ? How much time during the course of a day do we give to thought and reflection on the victory of Christ? How many times, while the battle is raging everywhere around us, in our own souls, do we stop and take the time to celebrate the victory of Christ and the victory of grace? Paul did, and the reason he could endure, the reason he could press on and on and on in his own spiritual advance and in his service for the cause of Christ was because he focused, not on circumstances around him, not on the pressure and adversity he faced each and every day, not on the problems themselves, but on the solution-- the Person of Jesus Christ. (Phil. 1:21) For Paul, life was Christ, and there was nothing else in life except Christ.

Maybe if we spent a little more time getting to know our Lord and Savior intimately and personally; maybe if we focused just a little bit of our daily energy and effort on the celebration of His Victory and the inescapable destiny which we have in Him, life might not look so bleak and bland and hopeless after all. Do not ever forget that as “sons of God,” as “Abraham’s offspring” and “heirs according to promise,” we are moving like a juggernaut towards an inescapable destiny in Christ. If that’s not cause for celebration, if that’s not cause for throwing a party-- a victory party-- in your own soul, or for every believer you know, then nothing is.