

THE PASTOR'S STUDY

Exercising The Mind || Igniting The Heart || Preparing The Hands
A free quarterly paper for rural pastors.

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Editor: Aaron Dunlop



The Walls of Fort Jesus, Mombasa, Kenya. Photo by Aaron Dunlop

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Editor: Pastor Aaron Dunlop (Northern Ireland, UK) Contact: krapfproject@gmail.com, +44 (0)7394-526-730
Contributors: Pastor Alex Stephenson (Germany); Pastor Caleb Nakina (Uganda); Pastor John Dyck (Canada); Pastor Tonny Karwa, Pastor Joshua Muthukya (Kenya); Dr. Joel R. Beeke (Michigan, USA); Dr. Michael Haykin (Ontario, Canada). All articles by the editor unless otherwise stated.
Layout & Design: David M. Frye (Massachusetts, USA)
Proofreader: Odelia Chan (Ontario, Canada)



WELCOME TO *THE PASTOR'S STUDY*

Welcome to this issue of *The Pastor's Study*. This magazine is designed to help pastors in the study of the Word and in subjects that are helpful for a broad, instructive and effective teaching ministry. The last issue was a special issue which focused on the life ministry, and legacy of Dr. Ludwig Krapf.

In this issue we are considering the very important subject of spiritual warfare, with a focus on the battle of Jericho (pages 6–11). In the editorial we take a bigpicture look at the book of Joshua (page 3), and in the devotional (page 20), both written specifically to help preachers to preach this book. On page 17 there is a brief look at the Church Militant, which we hope will help put the subject of spiritual warfare in perspective. This may be a good place to start. For our Biblical Theology slot we have a first-time writer, Mrs. Sarah Dalrymble, on those things devoted to

destruction in the battle of Jericho (pages 4-5).

In our Pastoral and Practical Theology section, we are thankful to have Dr. Beeke again, on “The Pastor and the World” (page 12), pastor Tonny Karwa, on “Relevant Application in Preaching” (pages 13–14), and pastor Jonathan Bartlett, on “The right Focus,” bringing us back to our main subject of spiritual warfare (pages 15–16). Our regular contributor, Dr. Haykin brings us part 1 of his article on friendship, which, as he indicates, is central to our spiritual warfare (pages 18–19). May this Lord bless this issue to the glory of his name.

Sincerely, Aaron Dunlop

UPCOMING ISSUES

- The Suffering of Job
- The Story of Obadiah
- Jesus in the Temple

EDITORIAL: JOSHUA AND OUR SPIRITUAL WARFARE

The book of Joshua tells us the story of how Israel defeated the Canaanites and took possession of the land that God had given to them. Very generally, the book divides into two main parts: the conquest (Chs. 1–11) and the dividing of the land among the tribes (Chs. 12–24).

In this issue of The Pastor's Study we are considering the conquest, and especially the first battle—the battle for Jericho.

But let's look for a moment at the story of the conquest in general. There are many important lessons here for the Christian soldier.

The conquest of Canaan is not a simple story of warfare between two armies. Just as in the Christian experience, the Israelites were faced

with multiple enemies (11:1–4), fighting over a long period of time (11:18).

The human author, inspired by the The Holy Spirit, tells the story by highlighting many different methods and means of warfare facing the Israelites. Notice, for example, how the enemy is presented as an unbeatable walled city (6:1), deceptive (9:4), a great confederate horde (10:3–4; 11:1–4), deceptively easy (7:3), and even in some respects attractive and tempting, even in victory (7:21). In all of these aspects of the conquest, the Lord is reminding us of our spiritual warfare, the wiles of the devil who disguises himself as an angel of light (2 Corinthians 11:14), and the sinfulness of our own hearts (Jeremiah 17:9).

Throughout the story also, the author shows us that as we face the enemy, we must depend on the power of God (6:27; 10:11), with faith and obedience (1:17; Hebrews

11:30). We must also put some thought into a strategy for warfare (8:15) and look to God in prayer at all time (7:6–9; 9:14; 10:14, Ephesians 6:18).

For Israel, as for us today, this conquest was a spiritual battle as much as it was physical. The story of the Israelites is our story.

THE THINGS DEVOTED TO DESTRUCTION: DO NOT TOUCH!

Dr. Sarah Dalrymple

Israel's defeat at Ai came as a shock to Joshua. We can understand his confusion and despair (Joshua 7:7–8), especially when we realise that he didn't have the information that we are given in verse 1.

When we read Joshua's strategy for taking the city of Ai in Joshua 7:2–5, we might think that Israel was defeated because of overconfidence following the victory at Jericho, or perhaps a lack of prayer ... or both. But the real reason for Israel's defeat at Ai is clearly stated in chapter 7:1—the Lord was angry. Why? Because Israel had 'committed a trespass regarding the accursed things.'

This word for 'accursed things' occurs more frequently in Joshua than any other book of the Bible. In Deuteronomy the LORD had

already commanded the Israelites to ‘utterly destroy’ the Canaanites (20:16-18). These references deal with what is commonly called ‘the ban’ or, the people or things ‘devoted for destruction.’ What’s it all about?

Dale Ralph Davis explains: ‘to be “under the ban” ... meant that people, places and material were off limits for Israel and were to be “devoted” only to Yahweh by destruction or—in the case of some goods—by placing them in Yahweh’s treasury’ (6:19).

So, did Yahweh command the genocide of the Canaanites? Is Yahweh for peace or for war?

To answer this question, we need to be clear about Israel’s identity. As a nation, Israel was the fulfilment of Yahweh’s promise to Abraham (Genesis 12:1–3; 22:16–18). However, Yahweh did not simply choose this nation for its own sake.

Israel's very existence had a universal purpose: what God did in, for, and through Abraham's descendants was ultimately for the blessing of 'all nations' (Genesis 12:3). His choice of Israel was not based on merit but was due solely to Yahweh's grace. God will shape Israel by his Law and Israel would demonstrate her allegiance to God as a 'kingdom of priests and a holy nation' (Exodus 19:4–6; Deuteronomy 28:9–10). Covenant faithfulness and national purity were key to Israel's mission in the world.

With this in mind, we can better understand the purpose of 'the ban.' First, Yahweh's gift of the land to Israel is at the same time a judgement on the sin of its inhabitants (Genesis 15:16; Deuteronomy 9:4–5; 18:12).

This action cannot be understood as 'ethnic cleansing,' for Israel herself will be subject to divine judgement for breaking the covenant—whether individually, or the whole nation

(Exodus 22:20; Joshua 7:11–12). By unfaithfulness Israel will also be exiled from the land.

Second, ‘the ban’ is a sure way to prevent moral and spiritual contamination. The reason for the command in Joshua 6:18 is clear: ‘they will make you sin against me’ (Exodus 23:33; Numbers 33:55; Deuteronomy 7:4, 20:18). Again, Israelites who broke covenant would be subject to the same treatment (Deuteronomy 13:15; cf. 18:20). This is what we see in the story of Achan.

Israel was defeated at Ai because ‘Achan ... took of the accursed things; so the anger of the LORD burned against the children of Israel’ (Joshua 7:1). The sin of one man had consequences for himself, for his household, and for a whole people (7:12b). The story of Achan is a tragic follow-up to the victory at Jericho. What can we learn from it?

First, God takes sin very seriously; we must do likewise. Second, we cannot hide our sin from God, (Psalm 44:21; Hebrews 4:12). Third, Achan's story shows how the LORD of the church calls its leaders to deal decisively with sin, (1 John 1:9-2:2). Fourth, Achan's sin has consequences for many, but God graciously reveals the solution. Just as one man's (Adam's) sin plunged humanity into sin and death (Romans 5:12-14), so the obedience of one man—Jesus Christ—makes many sinners righteous (Romans 5:15-19).

COMMENTARY: THE CONQUEST OF JERICHO

The conquest of the land of Canaan had been put off for forty years. The people had rebelled against the Lord in unbelief and all that generation had died in the wilderness (Numbers 14:1–12; Hebrews 3:19). Only Joshua and Caleb entered into the land.

These were men of faith who could see not only the land before them, but the Lord who had given them the land—the promises and the Lord behind the promises.

The people struggled with the exercise of faith, as they had done before and they would in the future. The Lord was ever gracious however, and bears with them, providing fresh evidence of his power. He had done this with the previous generation at the opening of the Red Sea. This present

generation has also seen the Jordan river open up.

God might be able to control creation and open up the waters, but can he do battle with the Canaanites? The battle of Jericho was ordered and arranged by God to show Israel (and us today) that he could, and he did—and that they should trust him in every future battle. Everything in his story points to God; the appearance of the Lord to Joshua (5:13–15), the strange formation of the people and no military operation (6:3–5), and the fact that everything was “devoted” to the Lord (6:21).

Jericho was a stronghold just west of the river Jordan. It controlled a large mountainous area in the center region of Canaan. The Lord had a strategy in bringing Israel across the Jordan at this geographical point. First, to defeat this fortified

stronghold of Jericho and then move on to weaker cities. Second, to drive a wedge into the center of the land and move out, north and south from this central point.

The divine commander (5:13–6:5)

The story begins with Joshua beside Jericho, (lit. “in [the vicinity of] Jericho”) surveying the city and perhaps enquiring of the Lord (5:13). It was there that the Lord appeared to him in the form of a man, a pre-incarnate appearing of the Son of God (See “Christophany” on page 16).

In physical appearance, there was nothing out of the ordinary about this man, and for Joshua it did not raise any concern or excitement. From the question that he asked (vs. 13), it is clear that Joshua was still focused on the battle, but the Angel of the Lord did not answer his question. The fight is the Lord’s fight, not Joshua’s, and the

Lord would not be squeezed into Joshua's categories. God does not fight our battles; we fight the Lord's battle (1 Samuel 17:47).

Joshua's experience here mirrored that of Moses at the bush (Exodus 3:5) and shows the unity and continuation of God's plan for his people. Moses is dead, but Joshua continues his work in leading the people (see Joshua 3:7). Joshua's leadership will become clear at the end of the book when he will take on the title that was given to Moses— "the servant of the Lord" (24:29).

But for now, Joshua is still in training, and the Lord has key principles to establish in this first battle of the Conquest that will need to be remembered in later battles.

The divine battle plan (vss. 1–16)

The gates of Jericho had been shut up. God however had a plan and it was a perfect plan, indicated by the use of the number

seven; seven priests, seven trumpets, for seven days, seven times on the seventh day (vs. 4).

All the men of war were to march around the city once, every day for six days. It seems that the solemn procession was divided into three distinguishable sections (vs. 13). First, a company of armed men (vs. 7), then the seven priests accompanied by the Ark of the Covenant, blowing their horns continually (vs. 8), then another company bringing up the rear, possibly made up of regular Israelites (vs. 9).

The trumpets sounding were not the normal silver trumpets, but large ram's horns, giving a low resonating sound that would be heard at a distance (see Exodus 19:16, 19; 20:18). The phrase that is used here in vs. 4 is "the trumpet of ram's horns" or more literally, the sound of the jubilee. The armed

men never used their swords, it was the priests who were active. The whole atmosphere of this battle was one of celebration rather than warfare! The shouting was a shout of faith and celebration (Numbers 10:2–6; 2 Samuel 6:15–16).

The divine assurance (vss. 17–21)

Everything in the city was to be devoted to the Lord (vss. 17–19, 21, see page 4), either to destruction or to the service of the sanctuary. Nothing was to be kept by the Israelites, because this was the Lord's battle. By commanding this, the Lord was giving Israel the assurance that the offering of the firstfruits of the crops was an indication that a full harvest would follow. This was yet another assurance that there would be victories ahead and that Israel would indeed be settled in the land (see Joshua 21:45).

Divine grace (vss. 22–27)

The dust had not settled on the battlefield, the noise of war, of soldiers running through the ruins and the shouts of triumph were ringing over the debris (vss. 20–21), but the Lord had not forgotten about Rahab. He had made a promise to her, and she had trusted him.

Rahab's deliverance from the destruction of the city mirrored the deliverance of the Israelites from Egypt. The Spies had given her a "scarlet cord" (vs. 18), and with this, she must fulfill the same requirements as the Israelites had on the night of the Passover. As the blood on the doorposts was a "sign," so also was the scarlet cord (vss. 12, 18, Exodus 12:13). The command also to gather her family for safety and not to "go out" of their "houses" (2:19, Exodus 12:22), connects this event to the Passover night.

Rahab was placed outside the camp (vs. 23). This was according to the laws concerning those who were unclean (Leviticus 24:14; Numbers 31:19). After the ceremonial cleansing, Rahab and her family were brought in to live in Israel (vs. 25), and in the grace of God, she would become part of the lineage of the Messiah (Matthew 1:5).

Conclusion

So why was Jericho so dramatic, and why did God defeat the first city in this manner? Let me suggest three reasons.

First, to show Israel that this was God's fight for justice against the sin of Canaan. This was not Israel's fight but God's fight. After centuries of mercy, God was bringing judgment on their sin (Genesis 15:16). Israel was not to fear, draw back or show mercy (Deuteronomy 7:2). God is holding out his mercy to a fallen world today, but will in the

end bring judgment on sin, as he did with the Canaanites.

Second, to show Israel that in wrath, God remembers mercy (Habakkuk 3:2). God had a special interest of grace in the city—Rahab and her family—and he must preserve them (6:17, 22–25). In this very first battle against sin, God displays his extravagant grace by saving Rahab and bringing her into the family of Israel (Matthew 1:5).

Third, God was teaching the Israelites that the battle is the Lord's (1 Samuel 17:47), and they can trust him in it. Israel's untrained army of wilderness wanderers is no match for a walled city. They must trust him not just in this battle at Jericho, but in every battle that would follow—he will fight for them (10:1–15). If they disobey him however, he will not fight for them (7:1–26).

STEP BY STEP: A GUIDE TO EXPLORING JOSHUA 5:13–6:27

Set the boundaries of your text

We have taken Joshua 5:13 as the beginning of the story, because here we find Joshua surveying Jericho for the battle. Joshua 6:27 makes two statements about Joshua that bring the story to a conclusion; the Lord was with Joshua, and he (and the Jericho victory) was known throughout the land.

Take time to read

Read the story over and over again. Get to know the story. It will help you identify themes, repeated words or ideas, and get familiar with it for smooth pulpit reading. Read the story in different translations—English, Swahili or another language. Read the story aloud also.

Do the work of exegesis

To bring out the meaning you need to get into

the details, the verbs, the nouns, the contrasts, repeated words, and connections with other Scriptures. When you examine each word in the text, make sure you develop your thoughts about that word in the context of this story. See the Preacher's Workshop (pages 10-11) for examples. You can also look for theological reflections, pathways to Jesus, and other points of application.

Find the meaning of the text

So you have the story, but what does the story mean? The Holy Spirit put this story here for a reason. The story is clearly about a battle, but there is so much here that shows that this was no ordinary battle. These unusual features, divine commands, etc., make it easy for the preacher to see that the Lord is teaching us through this.

Develop an outline

Break the text into manageable sections, and work through each section. It is good to work

through each section separately, but do not miss the flow of the story from one section to another. You will see that the outline I have developed is built around a theme—Jericho was God's battle. You may be able to identify another theme.

Make connections

Are there connections in the Old Testament, or the New Testament? Ephesians 6:10–20 is a clear parallel passage.

Time to get the sermon(s)

Now you can pick up on different themes, teaching or devotional ideas that you've found in the text. If you have enough material you could develop a series of sermons from the themes.

PREACHER'S WORKSHOP

EXEGETICAL NOTES (Notes on text, words, and grammar)

5:15. See Exodus 3:5

6:1. “Because of the people of Israel,” or literally, “in the face of the sons of Israel.”

6:2, 16. The perfect tense of certitude and confidence. This has already been done; “I have given” 6:2, 16; 1:3; 2:24.

6:4. The use of the number seven – “seven priests ... trumpets ... days ... times, seventh day.”

6:4. “Trumpets,” the ram’s horns or jubilee trumpets (see Numbers 10:10).

6:5. “The people shall go up” is the same verb used in Psalm 24:3 of ascending the hill of the Lord. This was not just a victory, this was an act of worship.

6:7–8. “Go forward...pass on” three times in these verses. Same word as cross over (3:1, etc.). Entering into our inheritance (crossing

over) necessitates going forward (going forward).

6:7–9. The formation for warfare: “Armed men” (vs. 7); the seven priests (vs. 8); the rearward (vs. 9). See Isaiah 52:12.

6:20. In contrast to Jericho being razed to the ground, Joshua is exalted (vs. 27).

6:21. “Devoted to destruction,” see Leviticus 27:28; Deuteronomy 2:34, See also Romans 9:20–22.

PREACHER'S WORKSHOP

PREACHING NOTES (Points for explanation and application)

- Christ stands on duty, with his sword drawn for his people (5:13)
- Joshua has a spirit of enquiry before the Lord (5:14). The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him (Psalm 25:14; 1 Corinthians 2:6-7).
- This was a spiritual and religious conflict not a military one (Hebrews 11:30). This was an act of faith.
- Think of the noise of battle around Rahab's house during the fall of the walls, and the faith and peace that kept her from leaving the house and running for safety. Her safety was in the promise of God.
- The Land of Canaan had not changed since the spies had been there forty years before. This was still a fight of faith, which every generation must fight.

- The ban on the city of Jericho was twice disobeyed at heavy cost of life (Ch. 7:1– 26; 1 Kings 16:34).
- The focus is on the activity and power of God, not on the fall of the city. The fall of the walls only gets a brief mention at the end. Here is a lesson.
- Victory in Spiritual Warfare
 - Waiting on the Lord (vss. 4–5, 10).
 - Faithful obedience to the Lord (vss. 17–19)
- The Battle of Jericho was:
 - God's strategy (6:3–5)
 - God's promise (6:2)
 - God's victory (6:20)
 - God's spoils (6:19)

QUESTIONS

It is always a good practice to ask the text questions. Asking the text questions will help you a lot, not only to understand the meaning of the text but also to apply the text to your hearers.

1. What does the story teach about God? This is the first battle in the Conquest of Canaan and the Lord is teaching his people that the battle is the Lord's. They must depend on him.

2. What does the story teach us about ourselves? This story teaches us that we are weak, we need the Lord, and we are to be careful not to act like Achan (7:10-26).

3. What does the story teach about Christ? This story teaches us that victory is through Christ, the Commander of the Lord's Army.

4. What does this story tell us to do? This story calls us to look to and focus on the Lord in our spiritual warfare. It calls us to trust and obey, even when obedience does not seem to fit our logic, or when we do not understand.

APPLICATIONS

Application is an important part of every sermon (see pages 13–14). The Bible demands a response and we need to show our hearers how the teaching of the Bible affects us personally. Show them what God wants them to do and how God wants them to change. Apply your sermon specifically to different kinds of people.

The lost

The people of Jericho had been warned forty years before, just as Rahab had told the spies (2:10–11 “we have heard”). The warning signs that caused Rahab to fear God, produced resistance in the hearts of others; see (9:1–2), (9:3, 9), (10:1), and (11:1).

The tempted

The command of the Lord was to leave all the spoils to destruction, but to take the vessels of silver and gold for the house of the Lord

(6:19). No doubt Achan did not intend to steal when he left his tent that morning. It was when Achan saw the good (7:21), that the temptation proved too strong. Pray for strength to withstand temptation in the moment.

The believer

There are encouragements throughout the passage to all believers, to trust God and to follow him as he is revealed in his Word. God's ways bring victory.

THE PASTOR AND THE WORLD, PT. 1: USING, NOT ABUSING THE WORLD

Dr. Joel R. Beeke

We must begin by answering the question, “What do I mean by the world?” In the Bible, sometimes “world” means humanity in general, but we are not talking about people. The New Testament also speaks of the world as the sinful, corrupt system of beliefs, values, relationships, and activities of fallen mankind. However, when I speak of the world, I am referring to the material world around us, the resources and objects (Psalm 24:1, “The earth is the Lord’s, and the fulness thereof”).

How we relate to the world springs directly from the doctrine of creation. On the one hand, creation tells us that the world came from God. It is his creation and therefore it is fundamentally good. Genesis 1 opens and closes with these statements: “In the

beginning God created the heaven and the earth ... And God saw everything that he had made, and, behold, it was very good.”

Between those verses is the account of the creation of mankind in God's image, with the delegated authority to rule over, use, and enjoy God's world.

On the other hand, the doctrine of creation teaches us that the world is not God. Therefore we should not worship creation or confuse God with his creatures or visible images of them. That is precisely the horrible error that mankind has fallen into, as Paul explains in Romans 1. By rejecting the glory of God shining in his creation (Psalm 19:1), we have enslaved ourselves to his creatures by idolizing them.

The very world God created good has become evil to us, not because it is evil, but because we twist it, elevate it and set our hearts on it to be our God. That is what we mean by

worldliness. We must resist and overcome this abuse of the world, if we hope to participate in the new creation in Christ.

This is the tension we live in as fallen human beings—between using the world as God’s gift and our tendency to abuse it as if it were God. Let’s consider each side of the tension: using the world (based on 1 Timothy 4:1–8), and not abusing the world (based on 1 John 2:15–17).

To be continued in upcoming issues.

RELEVANT APPLICATION IN PREACHING

Tonny Karwa

A pastor, seeking to be biblically faithful must consciously guard himself against two extremes. First, the tendency to give too much biblical information with little or no application. With this the sermon is full of content without proper analysis or application. Second, the tendency to address real life issues without laying any sufficient theological or doctrinal foundation. Spiritual, moral, and ethical transformation is produced only by sound biblical understanding. The Spirit of God uses the Word of God to transform God's people.

How do we avoid such a pitfall of lopsidedness in our preaching?

1. Understand the people in your context sufficiently well.

Preaching does not take place in a vacuum.

We do not aim our arrows at nothing. We do not shoot in their air. We preach to real people with real experiences, shaped and influenced often by cultural and religious concepts that are unbiblical. They are not neutral.

As a pastor, then, you need to understand something of their thought patterns. Paul expresses a knowledge of his Athenian audience in Acts 17:22-23. Paul concludes that his audience is “very religious” because he “observed” the objects of their worship. It is this observation that forms the basis of his sermon in the midst of the Areopagus (Mars Hill). Although he preaches the same gospel message, his approach differs from his previous encounter with the Jewish audience (Acts 17:1–15).

2. Establish a correspondence between your audience and the original audience.

Once you have analysed your context, look for

ways in which your audience compares to the original audience. Here is a clear example in Acts 17:22. Both the Athenians and Africans are “very religious,” and I would add that Africans are superstitious also. A typical African not only believes in generational curses but also the possibility of a relative in the village casting spells on them. Also, the so called ‘man of God’ in the mind of an ordinary African is an individual who possesses special power to avert or reverse such bad omen and stagnation in life. The ‘man of God’ is the Christianised version of the traditional witch doctor, not primarily a teacher and preacher of the Word of God.

3. Give a clear call to your audience to respond to your message.

Give some time to think about your application. Paul calls the Athenians to repentance since they have sinned against God (vss. 30– 31). This was his concern from the beginning (vs. 16). But he begins by

establishing their need for repentance (vss. 22–29). They are sinning against God by their failure to worship the true and living God who made everything. Instead, they are worshipping idols made of hands.

Paul demonstrates to them why they are accountable to the one sovereign God with whom they have to do. First, He created them. They are His offspring. They owe their existence to Him, not themselves or even their idols.

Secondly, He has providentially allotted them their dwelling place. Their living in Athens is not by random chance but by His sovereign design.

Thirdly, He sustains them by giving them life and breath and everything as He does to all His creation. Fourth, He has made Himself known to them through what He has created so that they would seek and find Him.

Consequently, these Athenians, and sinners today, are without excuse. They cannot justify their idolatry and failure to worship the one sovereign God. Paul is not merely giving a lecture on the doctrine of God, creation, providence, sin, and salvation. He wants these truths to be practically applied by his audience to bring them to repentance unto salvation.

THE RIGHT FOCUS

Jonathan Bartlett

As Christians, engaged in spiritual warfare, sometimes we struggle with a sin that dominates our lives, an addiction, or temptation. Burdened with this sin, we struggle then with how best to deal with it. Very often we focus all our attention on the problem and trying to fix the problem, but is this the best approach?

Whenever a person struggles with a life-dominating sin, they can become tunnel-visioned. Their energy is focused on fixing this one thing. But as they try—and try, and try—they become disillusioned, finding the problem coming back time and again. Jay Adams, a biblical counseling author, writes:

“Too often life can be built around problem-solving. Too often counselees can focus upon themselves and become morbidly and

idolatrously introspective, rather than center their concerns about Christ.”

What is the real problem? The real problem is misplaced focus. If a person focuses only on the problem, they lose sight of the solution: knowing God, His glory, and His truth, and this only adds to the struggle. Matthew 6:33 is one verse that helps us restore the right focus. It says, “Seek first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.” We are all called to have an outward focus on God and His kingdom.

As pastors, we want to put sin to death and grow in righteousness, and we want the same for our congregation. Matthew 6:33, teaches us to fill our minds with truth about God, His world, His works.

Meditate on the love of Christ. Seek godly conversation with Christian friends. Fill the Lord’s Day with worship and singing God’s praise. Pray for God to show you how to

honor Him in your workplace, in your family, and in all your relationships. As you grow in your walk with God in one area, God will increasingly sanctify you in other areas.

Someday Jesus will appear, and we will be like Him, because we shall see him as He is (1 John 3:2). We long for that day. Until then, we see Him dimly, but we do see Him truly as we behold Him in the Scriptures. Ask God for help to break away from tunnel vision on your problems and refocus on the Savior, for in seeing Him, you will be changed.

Yes, sometimes you will need to focus on particular issues more than others. But never forget, God will grow you in all areas as you focus your mind on Him.

CHRISTOPHANY

When Adam sinned in the garden of Eden and rebelled against God, God could no longer walk and talk with him as he had done. Man needed someone to stand between him and God as a mediator.

In time Jesus would come as God's anointed One (Messiah), or God with us (Emmanuel). But before Christ came in the flesh, God often appeared to men like Abraham (Genesis 18:1), Moses (Exodus 33:20ff), Elijah (1 Kings 19:11). Theologians call this a theophany; from theos (God) and phaino (to shine or appear).

God does not limit his appearance to any one form so that men cannot make an image of him and violate the Law (Exodus 20:4). For this reason, Moses only saw God's "back" (Exodus 33:23), and God appeared to Elijah in a low whisper (1 Kings 19:11–13).

A Christophany is a form of Theophany in those occasions where the text of Scripture makes it clear that the appearance is of the pre-incarnate Christ. Examples of this in the Old Testament include Judges 13:2–24, Genesis 32:24–30, etc., and where the term “the Angel of the Lord” is used (Genesis 16:7–11; Exodus 3:2; Numbers 22:22ff; Judges 2:1, etc.).

THE CHURCH MILITANT

Theologians speak of the Church being in two states: militant and triumphant. The Church Triumphant speaks of those who have fought the good fight and have now entered into their rest (2 Timothy 4:7–8). They have triumphed in Christ and have gone one to heaven (2 Corinthians 2:14). On the other hand, there is the Church Militant, also called the Pilgrim Church. The Church Militant speaks of those who are still alive on the earth fighting the good fight of faith (1 Timothy 6:12).

We should not think of these as two separate bodies, but the one body, joined together by faith in Christ—it is the Body of Christ. The writer of the Hebrews speaks of the church on earth as coming to the heavenly Jerusalem, joined to innumerable angels, and to the “assembly of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven” (12:23).

This doctrine of the Church Militant is a reminder that the Church is engaged in a war. In the Middle Ages, many felt that the only safe method of warfare was to retreat and to hide away in monasteries, escaping the temptation and sins of society. On the other side of the spectrum, the Church has often gotten so caught up in the world that it is hard to distinguish it from the world.

It is upon us to prayerfully discern the spirits at work in the world (1 John 4:1), as we wage war on three different fronts—with the world (John 15:19; Revelation 17:14), with the flesh (Romans 8:7; Galatians 5:17), and with the devil (Ephesians 6:12; 1 Peter 5:8).

The doctrine of the Church Militant is a reminder to fight in a manner worthy of our Commander, as the Israelites were called to do (Joshua 5:14–15). This warfare calls for militancy, but militancy governed by a spiritual reality. Paul reminds us that the

weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh (2 Corinthians 10:4). We should not think that earthly methods are more effective, however strange divine methods appear to us.

The doctrine of the Church Militant is a reminder that the Church will one day join the Church Triumphant. Jesus taught that glory follows the cross (Luke 24:26), so blessing awaits those to fight the good fight, for they will enter into rest (Revelation 14:13; 2 Timothy 4:7–8).

FRIENDSHIP: A BIBLICAL IDEAL

Dr. Michael Haykin

The English Anglican writer C.S. Lewis (1898–1963) has an ingenious little book entitled *The Screwtape Letters*, a remarkable commentary on spiritual warfare from the point of view of our Enemy.

In one letter from the senior devil, Screwtape, to his nephew Wormwood, Screwtape rejoices over the fact that “in modern Christian writings” there is to be found “few of the old warnings about Worldly Vanities, the Choice of Friends, and the Value of Time.” Now, whether or not Lewis is right with regard to a scarcity of twentieth-century, Christian literature about “Worldly Vanities” and “the Value of Time,” he is undoubtedly correct when it comes to the topic of friendship.

How different in this respect is our world from that of the ancients, both pagan and Christian.

In the ancient world, friendship was deemed to be of such vital importance. For the ancient Greeks—and this is true also of the Romans—friendship formed one of the highest ideals of human life. The pagan philosopher Plato devoted an entire book, as well as substantial portions of two other books, to the subject. Aristotle, also deals with it in two of the ten books on ethics.

While we do not find such extended discussions of the concept of friendship in the Scriptures, we do have illustrations of what friendship should be like as well as nuggets of advice about having friends and keeping them in that Old Testament wisdom book of Proverbs.

These texts leave the impression that the world of the Bible regards friendship as a very important part of life. See, for example, Proverbs 18:24, “there is a friend that sticks

closer than a brother.” Or the declaration of Proverbs 17:17, “a friend loves at all times.”

The Bible uses two consistent images in its representation of friendship.

The knitting of souls.

Deuteronomy provides the earliest mention of “a friend who is as your own soul”

(Deuteronomy 13:6), that is, a companion of one’s innermost thoughts and feelings. At the heart of the biblical understanding of friendship is then the concept of intimacy. It is well illustrated by Jonathan and David’s friendship; see 1 Samuel 18:1, 3–4. Here we see ideas of strong emotional attachment and loyalty.

Also note 1 Samuel 23:16– 18, where Jonathan seeks to give David strength in the Lord, not in their relationship. The privileges and responsibilities of a biblical soul mate, then, involve intimacy, loyalty and a strong emotional attachment.

A face-to-face encounter.

The second image that the Bible uses to represent friendship is the face-to-face encounter. This is literally the image used for Moses' relationship to God: in the tabernacle God spoke to Moses "face to face, as a man speaks to his friend" (Exodus 33:11; see also Numbers 12:8). The face-to-face image implies a conversation, a sharing of confidences and consequently a meeting of minds, goals and direction. In the New Testament, see 2 John 12.

One of the benefits of face-to-face encounters between friends is the heightened insight that such encounters produce. A proverb that highlights this idea is the famous one in Proverbs 27:17: "Iron sharpens iron, and one friend sharpens another."

The New Testament provided an excellent example of this type of friendship in the lives of Paul and Timothy. Paul is a man rarely

found without companions, and of his companions the dearest would have to have been Timothy.

Note: In the following issues we will continue Dr. Haykin's piece of friendship, looking particularly at Paul and Timothy.

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DEVOTIONAL: THREE PRINCIPLES OF SPIRITUAL WARFARE

As the Israelites entered the battle of the land of Canaan, the expectation was that they would take the armies of each city in hand-to-hand battle. This is the way battles were fought and won, and this is how they would defeat the rest of the Canaanite cities in future battles. But the first battle—at Jericho—was directed in every detail by the Lord. Three major biblical principles of spiritual warfare arise out of this epic battle at Jericho.

First, the battle is the Lord's (1 Samuel 17:47). We can see this clearly in the passage from three perspectives. Number one, the Commander of the Lord's army appeared to Joshua (5:13–15). Number two, the Lord took control of the battle and demanded a strange formation of the people with no military operation (6:3–5). Number three, the spoils of

war were not to go to the Israelites, but were “devoted” to the Lord (6:21). Our spiritual warfare is part of a bigger picture—the war between good and evil, between the God of heaven and Satan. This is the Lord’s battle and he will win.

The **second** major biblical principle of spiritual warfare is that faith is the victory (1 John 5:4). Israel was to do nothing but obey the Lord by faith that he would bring the walls down. They were to trust God for the victory.

The **third** major biblical principle of spiritual warfare is that the joy of the Lord is our strength (Nehemiah 8:10). Along with the Ark of the Covenant, symbolizing the presence of the Lord, the Israelites were to take the rams, “horns of Jubilee” (vs. 6) and blow continually round the city (vs. 13). There is no doubt this blowing of the trumpets and the shouting was the sound of triumph and praise, and those who understood this were blessed (Numbers

29:1; Leviticus 23:23; 1 Samuel 4:5; Psalm 89:15).

These three principles remind us that we are fighting in the victory, not for the victory. The battle has already been won. This is why we can rejoice, even in the midst of the battle; in the intensity and severity and, oftentimes the longevity of the battle, we need to remember to look by faith to the Commander of the Lord's army.

CONTRIBUTORS

- **Aaron Dunlop** was a pastor in Canada before ministering in Kenya. He holds a degree in theology from Geneva Reformed Seminary in South Carolina, USA. Aaron is the director of The Krapf Project and lives in the UK with his wife and children. He blogs at thinkGOSPEL.com.
- **Sarah Dalrymple** teaches Old Testament and Hebrew at the Irish Baptist College, Moira, Northern Ireland.
- **Joel R. Beeke** is a minister of the Heritage Reformed Church in Grand Rapids, Michigan (USA), and President of the Puritan Reformed Theological Seminary, where he is also the professor of Systematic Theology and Homiletics. He is the author of many books and articles.
- **Tonny Karwa** is the pastor of Grace Baptist Church, Kisumu, and a missionary with Heart Cry Missionary Society. Before his call to full-time ministry, Tonny studied Mechanical Engineering at Kenyatta University in Nairobi, and theology at Trinity Baptist College in Nairobi.
- **Jonathan Bartlett** is the Pastoral Intern at First OPC Sunnyvale, California, USA.
- **Michael A. G. Haykin** is Professor of Church History and Biblical Spirituality, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary (Kentucky, USA), and Director, The Andrew Fuller Center for Baptist Studies.

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