



Spiritual Warfare

Part 2: Our Source Of Intelligence

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It is a well known maxim of warfare that you must “know thy enemy.” Ancient Chinese military general Sun Tzu said, “If you know the enemy and know yourself, you need not fear the results of a hundred battles.” He also said, “Know thy self, know thy enemy. A thousand battles, a thousand victories.”¹

War cannot be waged without intelligence. The commanders in the field have to know the location, the direction, and if possible, the intention of their enemy. Countries spend billions of dollars each year in an effort to gather intelligence on known and potential enemies. The country with the best intelligence has the best chance of winning the war. Handicap a nation's ability to gather intelligence and you handicap their ability fight an efficient war.

We are engaged in a war. It is not a war against flesh and blood, but against principalities, powers, against spiritual forces in heavenly places (**Eph. 6:10-12**). The stakes are high, the battles are real, and the enemy is a mighty one. In fact, he is stronger, smarter, more adept, and more focused on winning the war than we usually are.

We need intelligence on our enemy in order that we might effectively engage in the battle. After all, we don't want to be fighting the wrong battle, in the wrong place, in the wrong way with the wrong means! That would mean certain defeat.

A nation engaged in a war can gather intelligence from a number of different sources. They might rely upon satellite photos, surveillance planes, spies, inside operatives, traitors from the other side, leaks of information, intercepted radio transmissions or other correspondence, anonymous tips, wire taps, or captured

enemy combatants for information. These and a host of other means are all fair game in the world of modern warfare.

Where do we get our intelligence for the battle that we wage? The Bible.

What? That's It?!?

Yep, that's it. One source and only one. No others.

We have only one source of intelligence that we are commanded to use. All our information comes from one channel. We have no where else to turn, no other source.

If you are responding with incredulity right now, might I suggest that your view of Scripture is *far too low*. If the following thought ran through your mind, “*Man. That's it? I am doomed. If that is all I have, then I might as well give up now.*” then your view of the Bible and its sufficiency is pathetically deficient.

Your response should be, “No problem, because it is all I need.”

Really, what else could you need. The God who wrote the Bible cannot lie (**Titus 1:2**), so we can be assured that all the information that He has given is absolutely true. Further, He knows infinitely more about angels, demons, and the spiritual battle than any other source could ever hope to offer. He knows the path to victory, He knows the past, present, and future perfectly. He knows the outcome and has assured that outcome. He knows the enemy better than the enemy knows himself. God also knows each one of us, our weaknesses, our needs, our frailties, and our strengths.

We have the **one perfect** source of **all intelligence**. It is absolutely reliable and trustworthy.

Up to this point, I doubt that any would question what I

¹ Sun Tzu is believed to be the author of *The Art of War*.

have asserted concerning God and His Word. The danger is not that you and I would **deny** these truths in the area of spiritual warfare, but that we might fail to **apply** these truths in the area of spiritual warfare. No true believer would ever question God's omniscience or His truthfulness. However believers fail to **apply** these truths in the area of spiritual warfare all the time.

Here We Are Again

I have written in this column a number of times on the subject of the *Sufficiency of Scripture*. There are few errors in Christian theology and practice that cannot be traced back to an inadequate view of Scripture. Just a few evidences of the modern church's pathetically low view of Scripture is its willingness to dabble with psychology, its readiness to absent the Bible from the preaching ministry and its constant pursuit of extra biblical revelation.²

The subject of the Sufficiency of Scripture is so foundational to Christian doctrine and practice that we find ourselves drawn back to it time and again. With the subject of spiritual warfare before us, we must return again to this foundational principle and remind ourselves of some fundamental truths. It is difficult to imagine a more crucial subject in which the doctrine of *Sola Scriptura* (Scripture alone), the Sufficiency of Scripture, needs to be maintained and applied. Yet, sadly, there is no area of the Christian life where that doctrine is jettisoned more quickly than in the area of the theology of spiritual warfare.

We begin where we must, with the Bible. We have to be reminded of what the Bible says concerning itself. We will find through this series of articles that we end up coming back to basic theology about Scripture and then asking, "How does this apply to spiritual warfare?" All faulty belief in the realm of spiritual warfare is a result of failing to apply our theology about the sufficiency of Scripture to this subject. All the silly practices, all the preoccupation with demons, results from the practical denial of the sufficiency of Scripture.

The Sufficient Source of Truth

When I say that the Bible is the **only reliable** source of information about angels, demons and spiritual warfare, I

² The lengthy series on *Hearing the Voice of God* contains an entire article on the sufficiency of Scripture. You can view those articles online at www.kootenaichurch.org.

am not asserting something of the Bible that the Bible does not claim for itself. How do we know that the Bible is sufficient and reliable? Let's take a look at just a couple of key passages.

The first is found in **2 Timothy 3:16-17**, "**All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.**" In that familiar passage, Paul used two words to describe the Scriptures, "inspired" and "profitable."

Paul told young Timothy that Scripture is "inspired" or literally "God breathed" (θεόπνευστος). The NASB translates it as "inspired," but the NIV better translates it as "God breathed." That is to say that the product you hold in your hand was given by the breath of God Himself. This is the claim that the Bible makes for itself.

When we say that the Scriptures are "God breathed," we do not mean that the Bible **contains** the Word of God (as if God's Word is found within Scripture somewhere).³ We do not mean that the Bible **becomes** the Word of God when I read it or experience it personally.⁴ Rather, it **is** the Word of God; whether it is believed, obeyed, trusted or not. It is an objective revealed truth from the God of the universe who has not only given His Word but preserved and protected His Word so that we have today exactly what was originally written.

Since the Bible is God breathed, then we can know that it is the inerrant, infallible, true and accurate source of information about life, eternity, history, reality, God, salvation, Heaven, Hell, and the unseen world of angels and demons. God cannot lie. (**Titus 1:2**)

Therefore, we can safely conclude that the Scriptures are to be believed, trusted and obeyed. The Scriptures are not a bunch of archaic observations by religious men over hundreds of years. The Scriptures are God's Word, holy, infallible, truth. Of the many sources available to us by which we might get information concerning the spiritual

³ Some teach that within the pages of Scripture, hidden in the words, or hidden in the teachings of the Bible, the Word of God is mystically contained. They would say that it is then up to us to read and experience the Scriptures in order that we might discover the Word of God contained within them.

⁴ This idea was popularized by the neo-orthodox movement of the mid twentieth century which taught that when the Bible is experienced and passages "come alive" then and only then do they **become** the Word of God to us. That is a hopelessly relativistic approach that Paul would have rejected.

realm, the Bible alone is vouchsafed as absolute inerrant truth.

The second word that Paul uses to describe the Scriptures is “profitable” (ὠφέλιμος). The word means “useful.” The Scriptures are useful for **“teaching, reproof, correction, for training in righteousness.”** When the Word of God is used in this way it results in the man (or woman) of God being **“adequate, equipped for every good work.”** *Adequate* means “mature, complete.” *Equipped* means “tooled, given the tools necessary.”

What do you need to make you adequate for spiritual warfare? What provides you with all the tools necessary to fight the battle? All we need is the God-breathed Scriptures which equip and mature the man of God for all areas of life and service. ***If you have Scripture, you have all that is necessary, and need nothing more.*** We have to get that truth ingrained deep in our souls. As you will see in the lessons to come, countless teachings on spiritual warfare direct us to look elsewhere for information about the enemy and tactics to fight him.

In earthly warfare between nations, intelligence has to be constantly vetted and analyzed, questioned and verified before it can be trusted. Those who gather intelligence have to constantly ask if a photograph has been faked, if the tip is reliable, if the source is a double agent, or if the leak was intentional misinformation and distraction. We need not doubt one bit our source of intelligence because it comes from the very breath of the God of Truth.

A second key passage is **2 Peter 1:3-4**, **“seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence. For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, so that by them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust.”**

God has granted⁵ to us **everything pertaining to life and godliness.** All that we need we have been given in Christ. When we came to a **true knowledge of Him who called us** we were saved and **became partakers of the divine nature and escaped the**

5 This is a perfect tense indicating something that is past and completed. It is not something that continues or needs to be repeated. It cannot be duplicated, added to or improved upon.

corruption that is in the world by lust.

By His glory and excellence, we have been granted everything necessary for life and godliness. That is a statement of the complete sufficiency of Scripture in the life of a Christian. Having been granted salvation by His calling, we have also been given all that is necessary to live the Christian life. This complete sufficiency is found in His **precious and magnificent promises** - His Word. All that God has promised us we find in His Word.

Between our salvation in Christ and the Word of Christ we have our complete sufficiency. What else could you possibly need? Can you look at the rich blessing of the Word of God and the salvation of God and being a partaker in the nature of God by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit and say, “Ah, that’s not enough. I need more.”? No. That is an insult to divine grace and to the Word of God.

All That We Can Know?

In affirming that the Bible is sufficient as a source of intelligence in our spiritual battle, we are not saying that the Bible contains all that **can be known**. God has not revealed everything there is to know about Himself, His will, Heaven, Hell, angels and demons. However, He **has revealed all that we NEED to know and all that He wants us to know.** *“God has not told us everything that is going on in these realms [spiritual realms], but He has told us all that we need to know to protect ourselves and carry out our mission successfully. When we begin to rely on information based on sources other than the Bible, we may render ourselves vulnerable because we have unknowingly overstepped our bounds.”*⁶

The Bible does not claim to be the only source of all truth⁷, or to reveal all that can be known about these subjects⁸. The Bible **does claim** to give us true and

6 Thomas Ice and Robert Dean, Jr., *Overrun By Demons: The church's New Preoccupation With the Demonic* (Eugene: Harvest House Publishers, 1990), 20.

7 For instance, the Bible does not claim to be a complete source for all truth about oceanography, architecture, quantum physics, or mathematics. But where the Bible speaks, it always speaks truth and cannot err.

8 We are not told what demons look like, what they are named, or even if they are named, how they are structured. There is a lot about angels and demons that we are not told in Scripture and that is by

accurate information and it **does claim** to give us all the information we need for any and every situation that arises in our lives.⁹

Now For The Rub

I doubt that many, if any of the audience that would read this would doubt or reject the inerrancy and infallibility of Scripture. Most of those who have taken the time to read this series will readily affirm all that I have said concerning Scripture thus far. You likely have a high view of Scripture.

As I said earlier, the danger we face in the realm of spiritual warfare is not that we would **deny** the authority and reliability of Scripture outright, but that we would fail to **apply** that belief. As Ice and Dean write, “. . . *even among those who affirm the inerrancy and infallibility of Scripture, many Christians deny this authority of Scripture in the way they apply (or fail to apply) Scripture to their daily lives. Many Christians do not seem to view the Bible as sufficient for every good work when we look at certain practices which they have built upon viewpoints found outside the Bible. This is especially true in the area of spiritual warfare.*”¹⁰

We will constantly return to Scripture, build our thinking and practice on the Bible and the Bible alone. We will challenge commonly held practices and beliefs with Scripture and test all things against the Word of God. We will seek to build our theology of demons, demon possession, demon exorcism, and spiritual warfare on Scripture and **only** Scripture.

Bad Methodology

There are two approaches commonly employed by Christians in building their theology of spiritual warfare.

The first would be the **empirical method**. This is *most prevalent* in our day. This approach seeks to find out as much as possible about demons, demon possession, and how to fight demons from any source available. People who have been demonized or spent time in the occult are interviewed. Information is gathered. Experiences are collated and mined for details.

It is not uncommon to find people building entire theologies and practices based on information gleaned

from ex-Satanists, witches, or even from an interview with a demon itself!

The second method is to **study the Bible** and the Bible alone! Too simple for you? Is this second method too inadequate, too antiquated, too passe? You might have guessed that I favor this method!

When the first method is employed, then there is no end to the silly theology and unbiblical practices that result.

For instance, I have heard people say that when dealing with demons you need to command them. Not any old command will do, but you have to command them “in the name of Jesus the Christ, the Son of God.” They say that there are demons named “Jesus,” so it does no good to command demons in the name of Jesus because if you don’t specify which Jesus, then you are just calling upon the name of one of these demons named Jesus.

Does the Bible say that there are demons named Jesus? No. So how do these folks know that there are demons named Jesus? People who are “authorities” in the realm of spiritual warfare will tell you that they have exorcised demons named Jesus. They have talked with demons named Jesus. This information was gleaned from demons! Is that reliable information? Hardly. This is a theology and practice based on the experience coupled with information gleaned *from a demon*.

Someone will counter, “But the person performing the exorcism commanded the demon to tell the truth ‘in the name of Jesus Christ the Son of God and by the power of His blood.’ If you command them to tell the truth by the name and blood of Jesus, they have to tell the truth?”

Does Scripture say that? No. Again, how would they know that? They were told by a demon that that is how you get demons to tell the truth. Again, experience and demon testimony.

None of these concepts are even remotely based on Scripture. It is quite laughable and yet Christians buy it up hook, line, sinker. You can find books on the subject of spiritual warfare by the hundreds. These authors will affirm on one page the authority and sufficiency of Scripture and on the next page promote a methodology of spiritual warfare based not on a single verse of Scripture, but on their experience, their interviews, or their encounters with demons.

Techniques and information gleaned from demons being taught as though it were the truth of God is the

God’s design and wisdom.

9 Ice and Dean, 22.

10 Ice and Dean, 22-23.

highest form of blasphemy. It dishonors God, besmirches His Word and impugns His character. This is doctrines of demons (1 Tim. 4:1) being taught as if it were pure and sound doctrine. This is the word of demons being taught as if it were as pure, reliable, true and trustworthy as the Word of God itself. That is blasphemy pure and simple.

*“Anytime we base a technique for dealing with demonized people on anything other than the clear teaching of the Word of God, we are doomed to failure. In fact, using any approach based on information not directly derived from the Scriptures is in practice a **denial of the authority and sufficiency of Scripture.**”¹¹*

It is absolutely crucial that in the area of spiritual warfare we build our theology on the Bible and the Bible alone. Let me be as clear, concise, straightforward and gracious as I possibly can. I don't care what you have experienced. I don't care what someone you know has experienced. I don't care what your cousin's mother's best friend's uncle's missionary brother has experienced in some remote tribe somewhere. I don't care what some popular spiritual warfare “expert” says, or what experience suggests, or what a demon has said, or what an ex Satanist knows. And neither should you!

We have a perfect source of truth that provides all that we need to fight the battle. Everything must be based on Scripture and Scripture alone. In coming articles you will see just how far some have strayed from this first principle. May God keep us in and on His Word!

Without Wax-



¹¹ Ibid., 34. Emphasis mine.