



CONSTANT COMBAT

Vital studies in

SPIRITUAL WARFARE and KINGDOM STRATEGY

By DON E. STANTON

“For our struggle 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. Therefore take up the full armor of God, so that you may be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything to stand firm.”

(Ephesians 6:12-13)

QUESTIONS THAT DEMAND AN ANSWER

? When Y’shua the Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ, is Victor, having triumphed over Satan at the Cross and having disarmed powers of darkness, making a public display of them (Colossians 2:14-15), how is it that satanic activity is increasing and countless lives are being destroyed through evil?

? Why is it, that while following a victorious Master, many Christians are only “half-victorious” and many others are utterly defeated?

- ? Why is it that many believers who once ran well, have ended up as “castaways”?
- ? How is it that even mature Christian leaders have fallen prey to the corruption of the world, the lust of the flesh, and the pride of life?
- ? How is it, that when followers of the Messiah have been promised the authority and power of God, they can resort to politics and gimmicks?
- ? How is it, when the LORD of Glory has promised to supply their every need according to His riches in glory (Phil. 4:19), that God’s people can stoop to financial improprieties, greasiness, and beggary?
- ? How is it, when the hallmark of Christ’s disciples is love for one another, that Christians fall out so easily, and resort to “shooting” each other?
- ? Why is it that when God has given so many magnificent promises, many of our prayers seem to remain unanswered?
- ? Why is it, when the Truth has been revealed, and the results of accepting or rejecting the Gospel are so serious and eternal, that Bible-believers are so easily lulled into selfish, petty living and castle-building?
- ? How is it, when spiritual weapons are said to be mighty to the destruction of demonic fortresses, that the church is largely on the defensive and is being either plundered by schisms and heresies, or stupefied by spiritual narcotics and sedatives?
- ? Why is it, when it is written, “we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us,” (Romans 8:7), that we sometimes settle for a “no-win war”?

THE ANSWER

It is evident that the basic principles of spiritual warfare are not being effectively practiced. It could be that many have not faced up to the reality of the spiritual warfare in which the church and the individual believer is engaged. Or it could be that these divine principles for waging warfare

1. have not been clearly grasped and taught, or
2. have been neglected and forgotten, or
3. have been abrogated or nullified by carnal living.

In these days when Satan is seeking to wear down the saints (Daniel 7:25), the Holy Spirit is alerting people of God everywhere, to be equipped for **constant combat**.

The tragedy is that when the Bible says; “Thanks be to God who GIVES US THE VICTORY through our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Corinthians 15:57), many Christians are willing to compromise with the enemy and call it quits. God forbid! More than ever, we must proclaim,

VICTORY IN Y’SHUA. YAHWEH MIGHTY IN BATTLE!

“Who is this King of Glory?
YHWH strong and mighty; YHWH mighty in battle.”
(Psalm 24:8)

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PART ONE

DICTIONARY

ABROGATE:	to cancel, repeal, annul
AUTHORITY:	legal power or right; delegated
BRUTE FORCE:	power without reason; animal power; power of nature
CARNAL:	of the flesh, worldly, of human nature, in contrast to the spiritual
COMBAT:	armed fighting, battle, struggle, conflict
NON- COMBATANT:	one who does not take up arms to fight
DEPRAVITY:	corruption, moral wickedness,
EVALUATION:	the correct estimation of the worth or quality of something
INSINUATE:	to introduce or enter a situation, indirectly, and slyly; to suggest indirectly
INVECTIVENESS:	strong verbal attacks, criticism or abuse.
MATURITY:	full-grown, fully developed, completion
REACTION:	response to influences and circumstances
RED-LIGHT AREAS:	areas of prostitution, immoral places
SPIRITUAL:	of the spirit, in this book, particularly, of God
STRATEGIC:	skilful, vital, essential, effective in fulfilling plans
STRATEGY:	planning and directing of military operations; plan of action; skilful ways of fulfilling goals
STRONGHOLD:	fortified place; fortress; area from which control is exercised.
YHWH / YAHWEH:	The Name of God, meaning, "The Eternal One."
Y'SHUA:	The original Hebrew Name of Jesus, which means, "Yahweh, the Eternal One, is salvation."

THE REALITY OF SPIRITUAL WAR

"Spiritual War" is not a quaint way of saying, "things don't always go as we hope." Oh no! Spiritual war is a fact - it's a very real war that is constantly raging in lives everywhere.

It is a war that has no reprieve or relaxation. The forces of darkness work non-stop - 25 hours a day, 367 days a year. No off-days, no rest periods, no declared times of truce. It is absolutely constant.

The evidence of the war is seen in lives - in despairing, defeated, and degraded lives.

It is seen in the classroom, where the battle for the mind is most acute. It is seen in our political systems where corruption warps the decisions of appointed leaders. The war is seen in the streets, in the news media, in our institutions, and in our churches. It finds expression in physical wars - in nations, in communities, and in homes.

It is fierce, not only in our inner city red-light areas and skid rows, but in the most fashionable quarters.

We see the forces of darkness working in fellowships, in ministries, and in all special campaigns and gospel outreach. It's Kingdom Warfare! It is a war in which the Kingdom of Darkness opposes the Kingdom of Light.

This warfare is in no way, a game. Some people have the idea that God is playing a big game with Satan and we are all pawns in the game. But Yahweh is not playing chess and Satan is not playing checkers. This is not a game - it is warfare. And we are all aware of the results of this warfare - in our anguished society, in broken homes and lives. Throughout the nations, the results are tragic and eternal.

The fact that it is spiritual does not mean that it is more mythical, or less disastrous than any cold-blooded conflict using rifles, missiles or even nuclear weapons.

But the consequences of the spiritual war can be far more long-lasting than a physical world war.

EVERYONE IS INVOLVED!

In Colossians 1:14, we read that God has transferred believers from the Kingdom of Darkness into the Kingdom of His dear Son. There are only these two kingdoms, and every one of us - every person in the world, is in either of these two kingdoms.

If we have been born again, we are in the Kingdom of Light, the Kingdom of the Son. And we have to face the realities of our involvement in His Kingdom. As part of the kingdom, we are going to experience warfare whether we like it or not. The kingdom is not a combat-free, battle-proof luxury coach!

Three things are demanded by our involvement in the Kingdom of Light:

1. Total **Loyalty** to our King.
2. Total **Dependence** on our King.
3. Total **Obedience** to the King.

This calls for an understanding of, and an abiding by, the principles of the Kingdom of God. We cannot afford to be a people who pray, **"THY KINGDOM COME"** and then live in disregard to the laws of the Kingdom? No! We must understand the kingdom's principles and strategies, and we must be prepared for all that the King wants to do in us, and through us, as subjects and soldiers of the Kingdom of Light.

THE CHURCH HAS BEEN ROBBED

Most believers are aware that we are approaching the climax of the age, and that this is a very crucial time in which we live. We are all aware of Satan's activities and soul-damning devices in the world. But sadly, we fail to recognise the demonic strategy to hinder the church, and our own personal lives?

Today the church is being bombarded by every satanic device that's calculated to destroy, and the tragic part is that the church is foundering for lack of spiritual understanding. Often, even leaders do not have a clear understanding of what God's plan and strategy is. The church has been robbed of vital spiritual understanding. It has been hood-winked into an acceptance of spiritual feebleness as though [that](#) were our inheritance; as though God had called us to a life of infirmity. So often, it seems, we don't know why we are here or where we are going. We talk about the Kingdom of God, about weapons, about the devil, as though they were mere imaginations.

It is a sad fact; the church is being taken unawares. The church is being attacked, and we don't really know [how](#) to repel those attacks - because we have not been taught the deeper strategies of the Christian warfare. Without clear understanding, we are defaulting. It is because we have either not understood those strategies, or because we have not applied the strategies in our lives.

This is a time when we must urgently re-learn basic principles of spiritual warfare and the strategies of Yahweh the Eternal One.

Yes, we all know that we "have to do something" - it's the last days. But we often resort to wrong strategy. We resort to human efforts and carnal strategies. Invariably, our understanding of the plans of God is so small. We ask, "What is the plan of God?" And quickly we reply, "Saving people from Hell and getting them to Heaven." Oh! But there are much deeper plans of God than just getting people to heaven.

Yes, it's true; God is bringing many sons unto glory. But His plan is [much](#) deeper. God has planned that His people should learn to [share His Work](#). And by that, I don't mean doing a little bit here and there. It's knowing and understanding the plans of God. It's entering into an ever deeper sharing of the mind and will of God. It's learning to live, to walk, to work and to conquer by the use of the same spiritual principles that God abides by. It's learning to share and to exercise divine authority, in fulfilling the work of God.

Beyond this understanding, God is preparing us, through our probation on Planet Earth, [to reign with Him](#), throughout eternity.

BINDING THE WORKS OF DARKNESS

We are told by the Apostle Paul, in 1 Corinthians 15:25, that Jesus must reign till all enemies are put under His feet. All things are to be brought into subjection to God. And we - you and I, believer - have a very vital part, as God's co-workers, in doing that.

The most readily recognised aspect of God's plan is that of redemption - saving those who have been enslaved by Satan and sin. But more than that, God is bringing an end to all the works of darkness. In I John 3:8, we read, the Son of God appeared for this purpose that He might [destroy the works of the devil](#). With the evidence of Satan's works all around, the question arises; Did Jesus destroy the works of the devil, or is He still doing it? Answer: He has done it, and He is still doing it, and He will continue to do it, step by step - all in an orderly manner - until Satan's work is totally destroyed.

At the cross, when He died for the sins of the whole world, Jesus broke the legal hold that Satan had gained over mankind through their **choosing to sin**. But the power holding people in bondage is actually broken, only when people **choose to call** upon the Lord and surrender their lives to Him. So the Lord's work, destroying the enmity, binding the activity of demonic forces, breaking the chains of sin, smashing strongholds built by Satan, must continue, day by day, through the preaching of the Word, by the operation of the Holy Spirit in conviction and regeneration, and through the use of spiritual weapons and authority by God's people.

And as part of the Kingdom of God, you and I share in God's strategy for the continuing work of combating the works of the devil. You say, "I can't do that! That's God's work." True! But you are called to **God's work**; so it is **your** work too. You are a part of the Kingdom of God, and it is the work of the Kingdom to **combat the activity** of the devil.

By the influences of the satanic forces of spiritual wickedness, the majority of mankind is also in a state of rebellion to God. Our response is usually, "Well, God had better do something about it!" But the Lord Jesus explains to His disciples, "I have called you, and I have shared My plans with you, and you are to do My work. **You** are the ones through whom I will do something about it!"

The "something" the Lord will do is not just "anything." It is a very deep work of the Spirit in the lives of those of His people who are willing, loyal and obedient; training and equipping them to continue and to share the work that the Messiah began - the work of destroying the works of the devil, and of bringing God's people to maturity.

A great tragedy is that sometimes we carry the banner "Doomed for Defeat," rather than, "The Victory is the Lord's." And indeed, because we do not know how to defend ourselves in the correct spiritual way, and because we resort to weapons of the flesh and neglect God's provision for our victory, we do seem doomed to defeat! God forbid!

The ultimate result of this spiritual war is **TOTAL VICTORY** for Christ, for He must reign till all enemies are put under His feet and evil is absolutely contained. Ultimate victory is assured also, for all who are part of the Kingdom of Light. But victory on the present battlefield can be, and should be, realized, for God GIVES the victory.

FOUR THINGS YOU MUST KNOW!

- 1 **KNOW YOUR KING**, His plans and strategies.
- 2 **KNOW YOUR ENEMY**, his plans and strategies.
- 3 **KNOW YOURSELF**, your position, your authority and your participation in the Kingdom.
- 4 **KNOW YOUR WEAPONS**, the effectiveness of those weapons, and ways to wage warfare. In other words, know how to put into practice, the strategy of God.

Our studies on these four vital matters are based particularly on the Book of Ephesians. The Apostle Paul prays that our eyes might be opened and that our understanding of the mysteries of God might be enlarged.

Let's read carefully, three passages from this thrilling book that form the basis of these studies.

“For this reason I too, having heard of your faith in the Master, Y’shua, and your love for all the saints (*the set-apart people of God*), do not cease giving thanks for you, making mention *of you* in my prayers; that the God of our Master, Y’shua the Messiah, the Father of Glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and revelation in *coming to* a full knowledge of Him; *that* the eyes of your understanding may be enlightened, so that you know what is the hope of His calling, and what are the riches of His glorious inheritance in the saints (*the set-apart people of God*); and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who are believing.

“*These are* in accordance with the working of His mighty strength which He exerted in the Messiah, when He raised Him from the dead, and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly *places*, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age, but also in the one to come.

“And He put all things under His feet, and made Him the Head over all things for the Ekklesia - *the universal assembly of believers who are in Y’shua* - which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.” (Ephesians 1:15-23)

“And you were dead in trespasses and sins, in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. Indeed, at one time, we all lived among them *following* the lusts of our flesh - *our sinful nature*, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just like everyone else.

“But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in transgressions, made us alive together with the Messiah - by grace you have been saved - and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly *realms* in Messiah Y’shua, that in the ages to come He might show the immeasurable riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Messiah Y’shua.” (Ephesians 2:1-7)

“Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Master, and in the strength of His power. Put on the whole armour of God, that you may be able to stand firm against the schemes *and strategies* of the devil. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against authorities, against the world-rulers of the darkness of this age, against the spiritual *forces* of evil in the heavenly *places*. Therefore take up the full armour of God, so that you may be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm.” (Ephesians 6:10-13)

KNOW YOUR KING!

If you are in the Kingdom of Light, you know that your king is Y’shua the Messiah - the Lord Jesus Christ, in whom dwells all the fullness of the Eternity Deity.

(Colossians 2:9). Yes, Y'shua is God manifest in flesh, and you have come to know Him as your Saviour and Master. You have come to love and deeply appreciate Him. You "gladly own Him as your King," and it's your joy to sing His praise:

*All hail, Redeemer, hail!
For Thou hast died for me;
Thy praise shall never, never fail
Throughout eternity.*

Now we need to know, not only **who** our king is, but we need to know Him in an increasingly deeper, personal way, so that we come to **know His mind**. It's then that we can more fully share in His plans and practice His strategy.

In the book of Daniel we read that they who **know** their God, shall be strong and do exploits. (Daniel 11:32). And you will recall the Apostle Paul's consuming desire, "that I may **know** Him." (Philippians 3:10). There's a depth to knowing our Lord that must be explored, if we would lay hold of that purpose for which Christ laid hold of us. (Philippians. 3:12)

To begin with, we must have a ...

RIGHT EVALUATION OF OUR KING

Who is - Y'shua, Jesus, our King?

First, what He is **NOT**. He is not a **nominal** monarch. He is not a **constitutional** monarch who has very little to say. Jesus is not a **usurper**! He is not an **evolved** master; He is not a **man-appointed, a man-made** type of king. And Jesus is not a "new age Christ."

Rather, the Messiah our King, is ...

The Eternal King
The Sovereign Master
The Majesty on High
The Absolute Monarch
The Anointed One
The Creator
The Eternal Word
The Living Truth
The Absolute Holy One
The Righteous Ruler
The King of Peace
The Lord of Lords, and Lord above all
The Legal Authority and Judge of all men
The All-powerful and All-knowing God
The Victorious Lord of Glory
The Source of Light, Love and everything Good

Y'shua is, of course, much more than can be explained. He is the beginning and the ending - the limitless One.

“And there are also many other things which Y'shua did, which if they were written in detail, I suppose that even the world itself would not have room for *all* the books that would be written.” (John 21:25)

It's Satan's accusation, flaunted in the face of the Lord Jesus, that Christ is a failure because His followers are failures. And this accusation Satan levels at you and me also - “You are a failure; therefore your Lord is a failure.” But Jesus is not a failure; He is **absolutely victorious**. And moreover, He is committed to the perfecting of all His followers.

Already Y'shua has won the **legal** battle so that slaves of sin can be set free. He won the battle, firstly, **on the Cross of Calvary**; and secondly, by **His resurrection** from the tomb. He first paid the penalty for sin, and then He conquered death, and “led captivity captive.” (Ephesians 4:8). And He breaks Satan's hold over all who choose to be free.

It is a fact, **Satan is a defeated enemy!** “But,” you say, “Satan is still doing so much mischief!” That's right! Although Satan was defeated at the cross, and although he is coming to his end, he has not yet been bound in the bottomless pit. He will go to the pit at the right time; he will be ultimately and completely contained in the Lake of Fire. Without thinking you may ask, “Why hasn't God done it already?” Because God's **strategy** is being worked out, step by step.

Our Sovereign Master is the **VICTORIOUS ONE**, and we must always affirm this fact, without any doubt whatever. Our Master is Victor, and He is on the throne of the universe, above every power. Hallelujah! See also Ephesians 1:20:

“He (*the Father*) raised Him from the dead, and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly *places*.”

So where is your King today? Where is He? In heaven! Not just in heaven! He is on **the throne** in heaven! Paul tells us also in Philippians 2:9-11:

“Therefore (*because He humbled Himself*), God exalted Him to the highest place, and gave Him the Name that is above every name, that at the Name of Y'shua every knee should bow - in heaven and on earth and under the earth - and every tongue confess that Y'shua the Messiah is Lord (*the Heavenly Master*), to the glory of *YHWH*, God the Father.” (Philippians. 2:9-11)

We must maintain this right evaluation of our King. He is the eternal Source; He is the Victorious One; He is on the throne; He is the righteous, holy God; and being All-wise, He is very **orderly** and perfect in all His ways.

Next, it is important to have a ...

RIGHT EVALUATION OF THE KINGDOM

You enter the Kingdom of God when you are born again. You enter the kingdom of God, but the kingdom of God also enters you. “The Kingdom is within you,” The

Messiah said (Luke 17:21). When Jesus returns, He will usher in another phase of His Kingdom - His reign upon earth. This is all part of the eternal kingdom of God.

A right evaluation sees the Kingdom of God as ...

1. the genuine Kingdom of **Truth**. Satan's Kingdom is a **counterfeit**.
2. the Kingdom of **Light**. Satan's kingdom is one of **darkness**. Darkness, you know, is not the real thing. Light is the real thing! And that's our kingdom; the Kingdom of Light.
3. A kingdom of **Divine Order**. We must recognise **that the kingdom of God is not a playground**, a place where everybody can do as they like, enjoying themselves by doing things that are usually done in the dark. The Kingdom of God is very **ORDERLY**. There are very definite principles governing behaviour, means and methods, relationships and positions. The Kingdom is not a "free-for-all."

The Governmental structure and administration of the Kingdom is under the King's direction. It is far superior to human government. This King is in **direct contact** with all His subjects. It is more like a body system, where the Heads controls every part. The King is the Head of all.

"But speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all *aspects* into Him, who is the Head - the Messiah, from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by that which every joint supplies, according to the effective working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love." (Ephesians 4:15-16)

In the Heavens, the King has administration . . .

- * **Archangels** (Jude 9. 1 Thes. 4:16)
- * **Cherubim, Seraphim** (Isaiah 6:2)
- * **24 Elders** (Revelation 4:4)
- * **4 Living Creatures** (Rev. 4:6)
- * **Ministering Spirits** (Heb. 1:14)
- * **The General Assembly** (Heb. 12:23)
- * **Myriads of Angels** (Heb. 12:22)

On earth the King has appointed administration.

"He gave some as

- * **Apostles**
- * **Prophets**
- * **Evangelists**
- * **Pastors (Shepherds)**
- * **Teachers**

for the equipping of the saints, for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ." (Ephesians 4:12)

He also appoints ...

- * [Overseers \(bishops\)](#) (1 Tim. 3:2)
- * [Deacons](#) (1 Tim. 3:8)

Besides these spiritual leaders, the King gives a variety of gifts and ministries to His people severally as He wills, to fulfil the work of God, which in summary is

- * [redeeming men from sin](#)
- * [destroying the works of darkness](#)
- * [bringing the Body to full stature \(maturity\)](#)

The King does not [appoint](#) anyone as a [priest](#), because every member of His body is a priest to God - offering the sacrifice of praise. The Kingdom is a kingdom of priests. (Revelation 5:9-10)

The King has not appointed a Pope to govern His work. And He has not appointed “Lords” and “Bosses.”

The work of evangelists, teachers and pastors we know very well. And the work of the invisible Spirit of God in convicting, converting and comforting, we know well. Another work in the affairs of men, is the ministry of angels. This ministry is unseen, but it is very real indeed.

“For He will give His angels charge concerning you, to guard you in all your ways.” (Psalms 91:11)

The Spirit of God - the Comforter - the Holy Spirit, is the Executive of the King - He is the One who fulfils the mind of the Messiah, and unites the whole kingdom into one Divinely-enabled power sphere.

UNDERSTANDING THE PLANS OF THE KING

This is not some vague, “give-it-a-go” type of scheme. In making man, God did not say, “Well, let’s take a chance. If Our plan for man does not succeed, then We will try something else.” No! God’s plan is altogether wise, and absolutely good. God’s [mind](#) (reverently-speaking, and for the sake of illustration) is a “super-computer of an unlimited kind.” Not only can it process billions of items and prayers per second, and process any number of separate ‘files’ simultaneously, but it can inter-process the past and the future with the present. Or to put it more simply, God knows everything about everything, and “according to His purpose (He) works all things after the counsel of His will.” (Ephesians 1:11)

If I ask, “What is the main plan of God?” you may be quick to respond, “To save people from Hell.”

That is a [necessary](#) part of the plan, but it is not the [main](#) plan.

“What could be more important than redemption?” you ask.

[The original and ultimate plan of creating and perfecting a vast family which will participate in the life of God, and with whom He can eternally share Himself.](#) This is to bring endless satisfaction to the Father-heart, and endless joy to His Body, His Family.

This is implied in the expression “bringing many sons unto glory.” (Hebrews 2:10). More than saving and getting people to heaven, God must bring all His subjects to **maturity**, where they embrace not only His salvation, but also the Father’s heart, mind, vision and will. Turn to Ephesians 3. From verse 17, we have another prayer of the Apostle Paul:

“So that the Messiah may dwell in your hearts through faith *in Him*. *And I pray* that you will be rooted and established in love, so that together with all the saints (*holy ones, believers*), you may be able to comprehend what is the width, length, height and depth of the Messiah's love - and to know this love which surpasses knowledge so that you may be filled with all the **fullness of God**.” (Ephesians 3: 17-19)

Here is a staggering fact. We know that Y’shua was filled with all the fullness of God, but here we see that Yahweh’s plan is for all His people - all subjects of the Kingdom of God - to be filled up with all the fullness of God. You ask, “How is that possible?” If I quote another verse in Ephesians, “**Be filled with the Spirit**” (5:18) - you may or may not understand.

Often we think of being filled with the Spirit, as having some power of God. Oh no! That is not it! Power is only a part of it. To be filled with the Spirit means that you are filled with all the fullness of God. This involves a continuous work, a process to maturity and fullness:

1. **New Birth**
2. **Renewal of the Mind**
3. **Rectification in Attitude and Behaviour**
4. **Breaking of the Self-life**
5. **Tried and Proven Faith**
6. **Release of the Spirit**
7. **Conformity to the Will of God**

To achieve His goal in us, God leads us to repentance, to elemental faith, and then on through various trials, sorrows and sufferings, to absolute surrender, and to tried and **proven faith**.

God’s strategy is to produce a deep work in the “inner man” - the spirit - of all His people, and at the same time, **to use every one of His people** to fulfil His plan to bring other members of His vast family to perfection.

“And He gave *and placed* some *members as* apostles, some *as* prophets, some *as* evangelists, and some *as* shepherd-pastors and teachers, for the perfecting of the set-apart *believers*, for the work of service, for the building up of the body of Messiah; until we all come to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a full-grown, mature, perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Messiah.” (Ephesians 4:11-13)

We will be dealing with this process more in the chapter on Know Yourself. At present, let us say, it is God’s plan that His people should come to **maturity**, as sons of God, and that each one should be **conformed to the image** of the eternal Son.

You ask in passing, “Why should a Christian suffer?” One reason: to learn [maturity](#). Consider our Saviour and our Example:

“In bringing many sons to glory, it was most appropriate that *God*, for whom and through whom everything exists, should make the Author of their salvation perfect through suffering.” (Hebrews 2:10)

Notice, that verse doesn’t say, bringing many sinners to glory. God is bringing many [sons](#) to glory. Of course, we are all sinners saved by grace, if indeed we have been saved. But we are talking about something deeper here. We are talking about [sonship](#). But this is not referring to male members of the church. The word “son” is different to “child.” In Scripture the word “son” refers to a child who has come to maturity. It’s nothing to do with whether you are male or female.

We are [children](#) of God through the new birth, but we are to grow into [sons](#) of God - mature spiritual people with whom God can share His plans for the present, and for the ages to come.

In this verse we see also, that the Author of our salvation suffered, and He Himself was perfected through suffering. You may say, “How is what? Jesus was always perfect. He had no sin in Him. So how can there be the question of Him becoming perfect?”

This scripture is not dealing with a sin question here. It’s dealing with [maturity](#). Jesus, as a man, came to [maturity in experience](#). Though He was sinless, He came to maturity through the sufferings He endured, and through His walk with the Father. So when Scripture speaks about bringing many sons unto glory, it’s not simply talking about getting sinners to heaven. God is not interested in merely getting sinners saved from hell. Of course, He is doing that, but much more!

God wants to implant His mind and will in our lives so that we will share His thoughts, principles, plans and goals. Through His dealings with us, including our trials and sufferings, we grow to maturity. And when we reach “glory” we will be prepared to share in the things that are yet to come.

I can’t tell you very much about the plans of God for eternity, because God has not revealed details in Scripture; nor have I been caught up into heaven or given any vision about His plans for the future. The Scripture says that it has not even entered our minds, the things that God has planned, for those who love Him. (1 Corinthians 2:9). But we do know that God intends that every one of us come to maturity, so that we will be able to fully share His eternal plans.

I don’t know how God will complete the work in us, but I do know that Jesus suffered, and that through His suffering, He came to perfection. We often think however, that WE will come to maturity in a comfortable luxury coach. No! God has called us to this amazing [participation in the Life of Jesus](#). Therefore all the trials that we endure, all the persecutions, all the problems we face, are used together for good and for our maturity.

We are told in another passage that we are to fill up the sufferings of Christ. (Colossians 1:24). And Paul says,

“Just as the sufferings of Messiah are ours in abundance, so also our comfort is abundant through the Messiah.” (2 Corinthians 1:5)

He explains further this association:

“Always carrying about in the body the dying of the Master, Y’shua, that the life of Y’shua also may be manifested in our body. For we who live are constantly being given over to death for the sake of Y’shua, that the life of Y’shua also may be manifested in our mortal flesh.” (2 Corinthians 4:10-11)

THE MYSTERY of GOD’S INTENTION

Through the Word, the Holy Spirit is teaching us, preparing us, using us, and as we go on, step by step, He reveals His plans, His will and mind, ever more fully, to us.

“He made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His kind intention which He purposed *beforehand* in Himself - a plan for the period when the age has reached its fullness; *a plan* to sum up all things in the Messiah - *to bring everything under the headship of Messiah* - everything in heaven and on earth.” (Ephesians 1:9-10)

So Yahweh has revealed the mystery of His will, His plans. And if you don’t feel very confident about the plans of God, then you need to study and learn what they are.

When a person joins the army as a private soldier, the Commander-in-Chief of the army does not come and tell this private the detailed plans that he has. The private has to gradually learn. At first he only knows the general plans but as he is promoted, to Corporal, Sergeant, Major, Colonel and later on maybe, to General, he learns more details of the plans. And as we progress in the things of the Kingdom, our Commander reveals more and more of His will and strategy to us.

We must keep on learning and progressing. The Apostle Paul says:

“To me, the very least of all God’s set-apart people, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unfathomable riches of the Messiah, and to bring to light what is the administration – *the plan and purpose, and the working out* of the mystery which from the beginning of the ages has been hidden in God, who created all things through the Messiah, Y’shua. His purpose is that now, through the Church – the Ekklesia, *the universal body of those who are in Y’shua the Messiah*, the manifold wisdom of God might be made known to the *angelic* rulers and authorities in the heavenly places. This was in accordance with the eternal purpose which He carried out in Y’shua the Messiah, our Master.” (Ephesians 3:8-11)

So the **mystery** of God concerns the **wisdom** of God. Here again we need a right evaluation; our God is an all-wise God. In our immaturity, we are inclined to think that God makes mistakes. We see things happening around us that prompts us to think that God has lost control. We may even be inclined to say, “Well, if I were God, I would do it this way.” But the **wisdom** of God is **perfect** and when the plans of God are fulfilled, He is going to demonstrate the perfection of His wisdom **through the church**.

Reader, you may not have any questions about the wisdom of God, but you might have a question or two about the church, for believers are very imperfect. You may

say, “I think God made a mistake about the church. He had better start again.” Oh no! (And remember, not all that is called “church” is the Body of Messiah). The wisdom of God is perfect, and as Paul says, through the church, God is going to display His wisdom. **The ultimate is that God is going to fill the whole universe with His redeemed and perfected people.** This we see in these passages of Ephesians:

“And He put all things under His feet, and made Him the Head over all things for the Ekklesia - *the universal assembly of believers who are in Y’shua* - which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.” (Ephesians 1:22-23)

“He who descended is also the very One who ascended far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things.” (Ephesians 4:10)

So God is preparing a vast family, and through His family, His people, God is going to fill everything. When God made Adam and Eve, He told them to fill the earth. And we see how well their descendents have done that of late. But God’s plan is to fill not only the earth but the whole new universe, with the redeemed physical presence of His people. He has not given us details of the plan, but we can see that He is going to fill everything with His people. And you and I have a part in that tremendous plan of God.

KNOWING THE STRATEGY OF OUR KING

Strategy is the ways of planning and directing operations to disable the enemy. Worldly military strategy employs all types of methods, good and bad. Satan’s strategy uses everything that is devilish, deceitful, and depraved. In contrast, God’s strategy is always pure, perfect and impeccable.

Divine strategy is God’s way of fulfilling His plans; and it is always . . .

1. SPIRITUAL STRATEGY

It is **never carnal** scheming. Reader, this may sound simple, but it is a very vital lesson that you and I must learn. For **we** so often resort to carnal action. You remember, the Lord Jesus said, if somebody strikes you on the cheek, give him your other cheek? Our natural, reaction is to hit back. That is carnality - devilish strategy.

Carnal reactions are not strategies and principles of the Kingdom of God, but are those of the kingdom of Satan. Have we not learnt that lesson yet? To some degree we may have, but we need to learn it thoroughly, in **practice**, and in all our **reactions** to whatever happens. Our strategy must always be spiritual; never carnal! When we give way to heated arguments, for example, we have forgotten divine strategy, and have resorted to carnal weaponry.

God always works in a **legal** and perfect manner. He never does anything underhanded, or in a disorderly way, and never takes action before the right time. He never defeats evil by use of evil. Our Master always overcomes evil by the principles inherent in His holy nature - and by His victory over the powers of darkness through His blood, shed on the cross of Calvary.

So reader, **let us not try to defeat evil by evil!**

Of course, YOU would never do that, would you? But when somebody does something against you, how do you respond? Do you bless, or do you curse? How is your response to evil? Is it in the same kind - tooth for tooth, and eye for eye? Carnal reaction? Or is it spiritual reaction? “overcome evil with good.” (Romans 12:21)

2. DIVINE PRINCIPLES

We sometimes ask, “Why doesn’t God do something? Look at these poor people suffering! Look at the terrible wars in Iraq and Afghanistan! Look at the plagues in Africa! Why doesn’t God do something?” And what we may actually be demanding is for God to abrogate divine principles and use brute force.

God never uses brute force as His strategy. God never uses the power of the muscle to defeat Satan. If it were simply a matter of His Almighty power, then God could destroy everything, and be finished with the whole of the corrupted creation.

God may use almighty power, for example, in winding up an era, or a society - the Flood in Noah’s day; the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah; the destruction of the armies of Rosh (Ezekiel 38); the end of the present universe, when the earth melts with fervent heat and the heavens are rolled up as a scroll. But in dealing with evil, and in areas where human response is called for, God uses spiritual principles to fulfil, rather than almighty power.

When the Lord Jesus comes with His mighty angels at Armageddon, He will not destroy the armies of Antichrist by clobbering them with almighty power. He will destroy them through His authority - “the sword” that comes from His mouth. (Revelation 19:15)

There are two ways of removing a mountain. 1. Drop an atom bomb on it. 2. By faith, say to the mountain, “Be thou removed!” (Matthew 17:20)

You say, “Both are impossible - to me at least. Mahmoud Ahmadinejad may be able to do the first, and Saint Somebody might be able to do the second, but not me.”

Yes, I understand, reader. My faith also, is smaller than a grain of mustard seed. But we must admit that Jesus could move a mountain by the principle of faith. There is no record that He ever did - and evidently there never was a need for Him, during His 33½ years on earth, to move a physical mountain.

Jesus could also remove a mountain by the Word of His almighty power. Which do you think would be easier - by the Word of Power, or by the Exercise of Faith? Don’t answer! That’s not the real point. The fact is that Jesus lived and worked by **FAITH** - just as He had seen the Father live and work.

“Y’shua therefore answered and said to them, ‘I assure you of the truth, the Son can do nothing of Himself, but only what He sees the Father doing; for whatever *the Father* does, the Son also does likewise. For the Father loves the Son, and shows Him all that He Himself is doing; and greater works than these will He show Him, that you may marvel. For just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, even so the Son also gives life to whom He wishes.’” (John 5:19-21)

Mountains, in the above context (Matthew 17:20), are symbolical of great obstacles - satanic roadblocks. The Master removed many of these mountains through faith. The disciples could not cast out a demon, because of [littleness of faith](#). But later, as their faith grew, they also could remove mountains of opposition.

God operates by spiritual principles (Faith, Love, Holiness, Authority). Jesus, God manifest in flesh, demonstrated those principles for us to observe; and the Spirit of God is teaching us to apply those very same principles in our lives and battles. (John 14:26)

Y'shua did not do His miracles by the exercise of almighty power, but by applying the principles of God. By faith He healed lepers, by faith He walked on the sea, by faith He raised the dead. He demonstrated [the principle of faith](#).

And in responding to obvious needs, the Messiah looked for faith in the people concerned. If there was no faith, He declared the fact, without faith it is impossible to please God - without faith it is not possible to experience God's miracle.

In Nazareth, Jesus could do very few miracles because of the widespread unbelief. (Mark 6:5). Was He not God? Yes! Indeed He was!

But someone will say, "With God all things are possible. So if miracles were not possible for Jesus - at least in Nazareth, it proves that Jesus was not God."

Wrong! My friend, absolutely wrong !

Let's consider the question: Can God do everything? We say He is all powerful, so how can there be anything He cannot do? Certainly God is all powerful, but there are certain things He will not, or cannot do (whether [will](#) not or [can](#) not, I'll leave you to figure out.) Look at these "cannots" ...

- 1 God cannot sin.
- 2 God cannot forgive sins unless the penalty for sin has been paid.
- 3 God cannot justify the sinner unless the sinner comes to the Saviour in faith.
- 4 God cannot wink at iniquity.
- 5 God cannot lie.
- 6 God cannot use carnal methods.
- 7 God cannot save anyone unless they repent and believe.
- 8 God cannot take sinners to heaven unless their sins have been removed (paid for).
- 9 God could not save Sodom - there were not even 5 believers there.
- 10 God could not prevent Jerusalem's destruction, because of Judah's apostasy.
- 11 Jesus could not save Judas Iscariot, even though Judas was numbered with the apostles. Judas did not believe and repent.
- 12 Jesus could not come down from the cross because that would have been a rejection of the plan of God.

So Reader, there ARE things that God cannot or will not do. God has limited Himself by the spiritual principles of Faith, Love, Holiness, Divine Authority. And as those principles are altogether wise and perfect, to abrogate those principles - to go contrary to them - would not be in order, and would not bring blessing. It would be going against His own nature.

3. MEMBER INVOLVEMENT

The King's strategy involves every **one of His subjects**. We know that all born again believers "are members of His body" (Eph. 5:30), and therefore we **MUST** be involved.

The King does not say, "Okay, I'll do all the fighting, nothing for you to worry about." No! He shares His plans and strategies with us, and **involves us** in fulfilling them. He **chose** us before the foundation of the world, as you read in Ephesians 1:4. This means He didn't do things haphazardly or blindly. He **planned**, and He **placed** us in the **right place** at the **right time**. And for our effective participation, He **trains** us and **teaches us to conquer** through the use of His spiritual principles, and by Divine authority - the authority that is derived from His victory.

We know that satanic schemes are calculated to frustrate the Divine plan.

Therefore, Paul says, "**be a good soldier** of Jesus Christ." But aren't we often inclined to think that warfare is for a few select, tough, Christian people. We say, "Don't talk to me about Christian warfare! That's not my line! I don't mind helping in the Church. Call upon me any time to take up the offering. I will sing in the choir, but this warfare - I am not interested in that. I'll be a non-combatant; I don't mind being a nurse on the battlefield, but don't ask me to fight."

But whether you like it or not, you are a soldier of Jesus Christ- a combatant - whether you are a brother or a sister. This is a reality. You are in the Kingdom of God; the Kingdom of God has an enemy; your King has an enemy, and therefore **YOU**, as a part of the Kingdom of God, have an enemy. And because you have an enemy, you need to **KNOW** that enemy and his strategies, and you need to learn how to defeat your enemy.

Believer, we must be trained by God to effectively participate in this warfare. To be a good soldier you need to go through a **thorough course of training** - and that's not a weekend in army camp. Every officer needs to go through a very rigorous course. And you and I are going through a training period right now, in which we must learn to conquer. We are learning the spiritual principles of Faith, Love, Holiness and Authority.

The Master is teaching us to walk as He walked, to react as He reacted, to do as He did, to fight as He fought, to conquer as He conquered. His words and life must be translated into our experience, so that we can increasingly testify, "I do nothing of myself, but only what I have seen my Saviour do. And what He has done, I do in like manner."

Y'shua teaches us to conquer through the authority of the **Blood of the Lamb** which spells defeat for Satan, for it is on the basis of the Blood, (which means the life of the Lamb laid down on the cross), that sinners are set free.

He teaches us to conquer by the authority of **His Word, the Word of God**, which is also called the Word of His power and the Sword of the Spirit.

The King teaches us the authority of His Name - **Y'SHUA/JESUS** - the Name above every name.

He teaches us to conquer also through the power of the **Holy Spirit**, the Spirit of God, who dwells in our spirit. The Holy Spirit is the power of God working within us, to teach us how to use the authority of Christ in “binding the strong man,” to lead us from victory to victory, and to fulfil God’s strategy for destroying satanic strategies.

God conquers also through the **Word of Testimony** of His people. Our faithful testimony is a means by which God defeats satanic accusations. Our testimony is to who God is, to what Y’shua has done at Calvary, and to what He had done in our lives. The Word of our Testimony concerning the victorious Messiah, is also an important strategic weapon.

In PART TWO, we will study “Knowing your enemy.”

