

**We Are At War  
There Is No Spiritual Switzerland**

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When an enemy wants nothing but your defeat and annihilation, neutrality means choosing death. The war raging in the unseen world for the souls of human imagers of Yahweh is that kind of war. Neutrality is not on the table. (Heiser 2015, 335)

Jesus ensured that we, His disciples, are fully equipped. But many choose not to engage, or so they think because choosing not to engage is a decision for, not against the enemy. Jesus made it clear what His expectations were for those who are faithful followers.

Matthew 28:19–20

“Go, therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to follow all that I commanded you; and behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” (NASB 2020)

This is referred to as the Great Commission, not the Great If You Feel Like Doing It. Something else about these verses, they are in the imperative, it is a command from our Lord.

To “make disciples of all nations” does require many people to leave their homelands, but Jesus’ main focus remains on the task of all believers to duplicate themselves wherever they may be. The verb “make disciples” also commands a kind of evangelism that does not stop after someone makes a profession of

faith. The truly subordinate participles in v. 19 explain what making disciples involves: “baptizing” them and “teaching” them obedience to all of Jesus’ commandments. The first of these will be a once-for-all, decisive initiation into Christian community. The second proves a perennially incomplete, life-long task. (Blomberg 1992, 431)

We are to be about the business that He modeled, to bring in those who were on their way to hell, literally storming the gates of hell just as He said in Matthew 16:18.

Ephesians 2:1–9

“And you were dead in your offenses and sins, in which you previously walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. Among them we too all previously lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the rest. But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our wrongdoings, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the ages to come He might show the boundless riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have been saved through faith; and this is not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not a result of works, so that no one may boast.” (NASB 2020)

2 Corinthians 4:3–4

“And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.” (NRSV)

Nearly all scholars identify this figure as Satan, but the name doesn’t occur in the verse or the context. Additionally, the phrase “god of this age” may refer to God himself. It is possible that the verse draws on Isaiah 6:9–10 (Septuagint), where it is God who has blinded the eyes of those who don’t believe. (Heiser 2015, 326)

I agree with many scholars on this point that it is a reference to Satan, Jesus made reference as well.

Luke 8:5–15

“A sower went out to sow his seed. And as he sowed, some fell along the path and was trampled on, and the wild birds devoured it. Other seed fell on rock, and when it came up, it withered because it had no moisture. Other seed fell among the thorns, and they grew up with it and choked it. But other seed fell on good soil and grew, and it produced a hundred times as much grain.” As he said this, he called out, “The one who has ears to hear had better listen!” Then his disciples asked him what this parable meant. He said, “You have been given the opportunity to know the secrets of the kingdom of God, but for others they are in parables, so that although they see they may not see, and although they hear they may not understand. “Now the parable means this: The seed is the word of God. Those along the path are the ones who have heard; then the devil comes and takes away the word from their hearts, so that they may not believe and be saved. Those on the rock are the ones who receive the word with joy when they hear it, but they have no root. They believe for a while, but in a time of testing fall away. As for the seed that fell among thorns, these are the ones who hear, but as they go on their way they are choked by the worries and riches and pleasures of life, and their fruit does not mature. But as for the seed that landed on good soil, these are the ones who, after hearing the word, cling to it with an honest and good heart, and bear fruit with steadfast endurance.” (NET 2nd ed.)

So, we see that we are engaged with forces who are diametrically opposed to what God would want for us and for the church. This is the enemy.

God wants us about the business that Jesus modeled for us, and He has equipped us for the job with the Holy Spirit indwelling each of us personally.

### Ephesians 6:10–17

“Finally, be strengthened in the Lord and in the strength of his power. Clothe yourselves with the full armor of God so that you will be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavens. For this reason, take up the full armor of God, so that you may be able to stand your ground on the evil day, and having done everything, to stand. Stand firm therefore, by fastening the belt of truth around your waist, by putting on the breastplate of righteousness, by fitting your feet with the preparation that comes from the good news of peace, and in all of this, by taking up the shield of faith with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. And take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit (which is the word of God).” (NET 2nd ed.)

When they are called rulers of “this dark domain,” they are associated with the “dominion of darkness” from which, according to Col. 1:13, the people of Christ have been rescued. They will do their best to reclaim the people of Christ for their own dominion, but their attempts will be fruitless if the people of Christ resist them with the spiritual resources which are now placed at their disposal. Only spiritual resources can prevail against them, for they themselves are “spiritual forces,” and forces of evil at that. The heavenly realm in which they are located has been mentioned already as the realm in which “principalities and powers” learn lessons in divine wisdom (Eph. 3:10); it is also the realm in which Christ sits enthroned at God’s right hand, high above every principality and power (Eph. 1:20–21) and in which his people have been made to sit along with him (Eph. 2:6). The heavenly realm may be envisaged as comprising a succession of levels, with the throne of God on the highest of these and the hostile forces occupying the lowest. The level which they occupy is probably identical with “the domain of the air,” ruled (according to Eph. 2:2) by “the spirit which now operates in the disobedient.” At any rate, these are real forces of evil which are encountered in the spiritual sphere, and they have to be withstood. The spirit of the age—any age—is rarely found in alliance with the Spirit of Christ. (Bruce 1984, 406)

Things to remember – you and I are sacred space.

### 1 Corinthians 6:19

“Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own,” (ESV)

The same presence that was in the Holy of Holies now is in you and me.

### Matthew 18:20

“For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them.” (ESV)

But put in the context of this other New Testament language, which in turn is informed by the Old Testament imagery of the tabernacle and temple, it means that wherever believers are and gather, the spiritual ground they occupy is sanctified amid the powers of darkness. (Heiser 2015, 333)

If we could see with spiritual eyes, we would see light, right here, surrounded by darkness that has points of light in it, but when those points of light come together, the darkness begins to fade.

Back to what Jesus said to us in the Great Commission, the main words are

- Go
- make disciples (all the nations)
- baptizing them
- Teaching them

We naturally move about and go from one place to another, as we are going, we have a task, that may be as simple as walking next door, but remember this, Jesus came to reverse that which took place in Genesis 3, 6 and 11. Part of that reversal includes reclaiming the nations that rebelled against YAHWEH’s commands at Babel.

The sentence structure is of a main verb in the imperative, “make disciples,” followed by two uncoordinated participles, “baptizing,” “teaching,” which spell out the process of making disciples. (France 2007, 1115)

### **Baptism = Spiritual Warfare**

1 Peter 3:14–22

But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you will be blessed. Have no fear of them, nor be troubled, but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect, having a good conscience, so that, when you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame. For it is better to suffer for doing good, if that should be God's will, than for doing evil. For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit, in which he went and proclaimed to the spirits in prison, because they formerly did not obey, when God's patience waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were brought safely through water. Baptism, which corresponds to this, now saves you, not as a removal of dirt from the body but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers having been subjected to him. (ESV)

Rather than fear the unbelievers around them, Christians, out of reverence to Christ, should be prepared to respond fully to their often hostile questions about the faith. (Davids 1990, 131-132)

And with gentleness and respect, and that requires the Holy Spirit to do.

Ok, got it, most of this section of scripture says that as believers, we will withstand persecution and we need to persevere in the faith. Got it.

But baptism, the ark, Noah and spirits in prison?

Peter is thinking of typology, sometimes the scripture speaks specifically about a topic, other times, a person's life may be a type of what we can expect of someone else. Joseph is a type of Christ, so was David.

Here, Peter is looking at events that led to the flood, and as we have discussed in the past, he is familiar with the events in 1 Enoch and in fact alludes to it in 2 Peter 2:4. Recall as we studied that 1 Enoch makes reference to the events in Genesis 6:1-3 and gives additional detail about the watchers who fell and were then imprisoned. From the Septuagint.

Enoch 13:1–5

“Enoch said to Azael, “Go: There will be no peace for you; great judgment has come out against you to bind you. There will be neither pause nor questioning for you about which wrongs you made known and about all works of ungodliness, wrongdoing, and sin, all that you declared to the humans.” Then I went and spoke to all of them. They all were terrified: trembling and fear took hold of them. They request that I should write to them records of questioning so that there might be a remission of sins for them, and that I might read to them the record of questioning before the Lord of heaven. For they are not yet able to speak nor lift their eyes to the heaven from the shame of their sin; so they were condemned.” (Lexham Press 2020, Enoch 13:1-5)

The watchers are appealing their sentence through Enoch to YAHWEH. Enoch went and visited the watchers in their prison. Needless to say, their appeal, due to their sin, did not go far.

#### Enoch 14:4–5

“I wrote your request from the angels and in my vision I was shown this: your request was not received, namely, that you may no longer go up to heaven for all time; and you are bound with the chains of the earth for all the eternities.” (Lexham Press 2020, Enoch 14:4-5)

Enoch sees a place of imprisonment and is told, “These are among the stars of heaven that have transgressed the commandments of the Lord and are bound in this place” (21:6). Here, then, we have an event that includes all the elements to which Peter refers, spirits (angels, stars, Watchers, and spirits are used interchangeably by 1 Enoch) that were disobedient (“transgressed the commandment of the Lord”) and were therefore put in prison (“This place is a prison house of the angels; they are detained here forever,” 1 Enoch 21:10), all of this happening with relation to the days of Noah. (Davids 1990, 140)

Enoch then is a type of Christ who then went and did the same thing Enoch did.

...this passage in 1 Peter refers to a proclamation of judgment by the resurrected Christ to the imprisoned spirits, that is, the fallen angels, sealing their doom as he triumphed over sin and death and hell, redeeming human beings. (Davids 1990, 141)

Like Noah these Christians are a small, persecuted minority surrounded by a majority that is disobedient to God and, if Peter follows Pauline theology at this point, led controlled by disobedient spirits. But Christ’s triumphant proclamation and the citation of the narrative of the deluge remind them that they will be the delivered minority just as Noah and his family were, which is surely comforting in a time of suffering. (Davids 1990, 143)

#### 1 Peter 3:21

“Corresponding to that, baptism now saves you—not the removal of dirt from the flesh, but an appeal to God for a good conscience—through the resurrection of Jesus Christ,” (NASB 2020)

Is Peter supporting baptismal regeneration? No.

First, while baptism does consist in a washing in water, it is not this outward washing (“the removal of dirt from the body”) that is salvific. The water does not have a magical quality; neither does the outward ritual. Second, baptism saves through a pledge or “answer to God” from a “good conscience.” The first term is the more critical, but unfortunately appears only here in the NT. Two translations are possible. The one relates it closely to its verbal root and argues that it means “request” and therefore “the request of a good conscience from God.” Baptism is therefore a call to God for purification (cf. Heb. 10:22). The other points to uses of the term for oracle or decision (Sir. 33:3; Dan. 4:17 in Theodotion) and its second-century use for “pledge” or a formal answer to questions placed by another. In this case baptism is a response to God in answer to questions placed by the baptizer (e.g., “Do you commit yourself to follow Christ?”). That this latter is more probable appears in that some Jews also made pledges at their initiation into a community (e.g., in the Dead Sea Scrolls 1QS 1–2; 1QS 5:8–10), that this is the way the Fathers understood the passage, that the NT gives hints of such questioning (Acts 8:37; 1 Tim. 6:12), and that this fits the expected thrust of the passage (i.e., not the outward washing, but the inward pledge). If this interpretation is true, then the salvific aspect of baptism arises from the pledge of oneself to God as a response to questions formally asked at baptism. But this answer must be given from a good conscience. (Davids 1990, 144-145)

The idea of a covenant being spoken by a convert is not new, it was done in Judaism at the time. This is reflected in the Dead Sea Scrolls in 1QS 5:7-10.

Whoever enters the council of the Community enters the covenant of God in the presence of all who freely volunteer. He shall swear with a binding oath to revert to the Law of Moses, according to all that he commanded, with whole heart and whole soul, in compliance with all that has been revealed of it to the sons of Zadok, the priests who keep the covenant and interpret his will and to the multitude of the men of their covenant who freely volunteer together for this truth and to walk according to his will. He should

swear by the covenant to be segregated from all the men of injustice who walk. (Florentino and Tigchelaar 1997, 81)

Baptism, then, is not what produces salvation. It “saves” in that it reflects a heart decision: a pledge of loyalty to the risen Savior. In effect, baptism in New Testament theology is a loyalty oath, a public avowal of who is on the Lord’s side in the cosmic war between good and evil. But in addition to that, it is also a visceral reminder to the defeated fallen angels. Every baptism is a reiteration of their doom in the wake of the gospel and the kingdom of God. Early Christians understood the typology of this passage and its link back to the fallen angels of Genesis 6. Early baptismal formulas included a renunciation of Satan and his angels for this very reason. Baptism was—and still is—spiritual warfare. (Heiser 2015, 338-339)

Communion is also part of solidarity and identification with Jesus and with YAHWEH. Each time we take communion, we are not only showing the enemy our loyalty to YAHWEH, but also remind him of his doom.

Paul discussed in 1 Corinthians 10 the need to not fall into the same problems the nation had fallen into, worshipping false gods, not taking to heart the requirement stated in the shema

Deuteronomy 6:4–5

“Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.” (ESV)

The shema is worded in a way that the existence of false gods is not denied, but YAHWEH is our God.

Paul, in 1 Corinthians 10, warns of idolatry and he calls out what the truth is.

1 Corinthians 10:20–21

“No, I imply that what pagans sacrifice they offer to demons and not to God. I do not want you to be participants with demons. You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons. You cannot partake of the table of the Lord and the table of demons.” (ESV)

As Christians, we have declared loyalty to YAHWEH and identified ourselves with Jesus Christ. The nation of Israel did the same in terms of identifying and declaring loyalty with YAHWEH, but then they went across the street, literally, and worshipped somewhere else.

Paul couches the discussion in terms of the meat market in Corinth.

1 Corinthians 10:25–29

Eat whatever is sold in the meat market without raising any question on the ground of conscience. For “the earth is the Lord’s, and the fullness thereof.” If one of the unbelievers invites you to dinner and you are disposed to go, eat whatever is set before you without raising any question on the ground of conscience. But if someone says to you, “This has been offered in sacrifice,” then do not eat it, for the sake of the one who informed you, and for the sake of conscience— I do not mean your conscience, but his. For why should my liberty be determined by someone else’s conscience? (ESV)

For Paul, the pagan gods were demons. For Israel, the pagan gods were the same, fallen divine beings, or in New Testament language, demons.

The meat wasn’t really the issue; being involved in the sacrifice was. Apparently, some in the Corinthian church had gone beyond eating the meat to actual participation, assuming that since an idol was just a piece of wood or stone, their participation wouldn’t offend God. (Heiser 2015, 341)

If we as believers have participated in communion and have shown solidarity with and loyalty to YAHWEH, then if we step over that line and indulge in the occult, or astrology, who exactly are we loyal to?

Remember, the Holy Spirit dwells in each of us, we are sacred space. When we gather together, this space becomes sacred space simply because of who is in it, the redeemed.

#### Revelation 4:1–11

“After these things I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven. And the first voice which I heard was like a trumpet speaking with me, saying, “Come up here, and I will show you things which must take place after this.” Immediately I was in the Spirit; and behold, a throne set in heaven, and One sat on the throne. And He who sat there was like a jasper and a sardius stone in appearance; and there was a rainbow around the throne, in appearance like an emerald. Around the throne were twenty-four thrones, and on the thrones I saw twenty-four elders sitting, clothed in white robes; and they had crowns of gold on their heads. And from the throne proceeded lightnings, thunders, and voices. Seven lamps of fire were burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God. Before the throne there was a sea of glass, like crystal. And in the midst of the throne, and around the throne, were four living creatures full of eyes in front and in back. The first living creature was like a lion, the second living creature like a calf, the third living creature had a face like a man, and the fourth living creature was like a flying eagle. The four living creatures, each having six wings, were full of eyes around and within. And they do not rest day or night, saying: “Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, Who was and is and is to come!” Whenever the living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to Him who sits on the throne, who lives forever and ever, the twenty-four elders fall down before Him who sits on the throne and worship Him who lives forever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying: “You are worthy, O Lord, To receive glory and honor and power; For You created all things, And by Your will they exist and were created.”” (NKJV)

- Yes, a Divine Council scene.
- Yes, language that reminds us of Isaiah 6:3
- John identifies elements we saw in Ezekiel 1 and 10 (cherubim), wings on the creatures like Isaiah 6 (seraphim), God on the throne like in Isaiah 6, Ezekiel 1 and Daniel 7, pictures and images we saw back in Exodus 24 and Ezekiel 1.

We see 24 elders sitting on thrones, who are they? Based on Revelation 5:11, they are not angels. They could be human or could be faithful divine members of the council. What is clear is that scene and the one in Daniel 7 clearly point to the divine council having a part in the last days. By the way, they are the church.

When Jesus returns to earth, after the nation has petitioned Him to return.

#### Zechariah 13:9

“I will bring the one-third through the fire, Will refine them as silver is refined, And test them as gold is tested. They will call on My name, And I will answer them. I will say, ‘This is My people’; And each one will say, ‘The LORD is my God.’”” (NKJV)

When He returns, who is part of the army?

#### 1 Thessalonians 3:13

“Then your hearts will be strong, blameless, and holy in the presence of God, who is our Father, **when our Lord Jesus appears with all his saints.**” (ISV)

#### Jude 14–15

“Enoch, in the seventh generation from Adam, prophesied about these people when he said, “Look! The Lord has come with countless thousands of his holy ones. He will judge all people and convict everyone of all the ungodly things that they have done in such an ungodly way, including all the harsh things that these ungodly sinners have said about him.” (ISV)

#### Revelation 22:1–5

Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb through the middle of the street of the city; also, on either side of the river, the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. No longer will there be anything accursed, but the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him. They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. And night will be no more. They will need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign forever and ever. (ESV)

The goal all along is to restore Eden here on earth. God will dwell with His people. The war will finally end, and the enemy banished, forever. (Matthew 25:41)

#### Revelation 20:10

“...and the devil who had deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and sulfur where the beast and the false prophet were, and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.” (ESV)

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