



Church Newsletter

First Baptist Church of Niles

Volume 1/Issue 12

WHAT WE ARE DOING? AND WHAT WE SHOULD DO?

IN THIS ISSUE

WELCOME

This week's reading is Psalm 75 (ESV). Titled, God Will Judge with Equity

To the choirmaster: according to Do Not Destroy. A Psalm of Asaph. A Song.

We give thanks to you, O God; we give thanks, for your name is near. We recount your wondrous deeds.² "At the set time that I appoint I will judge with equity.³ When the earth totters, and all its inhabitants, it is I who keep steady its pillars. *Selah*

⁴ I say to the boastful, 'Do not boast,' and to the wicked, 'Do not lift up your horn; ⁵ do not lift up your horn on high, or speak with haughty neck.'" ⁶ For not from the east or from the west and not from the wilderness comes lifting up, ⁷ but it is God who executes judgment, putting down one and lifting up another.

⁸ For in the hand of the LORD there is a cup with foaming wine, well mixed, and he pours out from it, and all the wicked of the earth shall drain it down to the dregs. ⁹ But I will declare it forever;

I will sing praises to the God of Jacob.

¹⁰ All the horns of the wicked I will cut

off, but the horns of the righteous shall be lifted up.

This is a hymn of praise, thanking God for the wondrous deeds he has done for Israel, and celebrating the fact that he is the judge of all the earth and will, in his own time, put down the wicked and lift up the faithful. There is no indication of a specific occasion for which someone wrote this psalm or the congregation sang it, but this is not surprising; it's lesson of faith (God's sovereign rule that this psalm celebrates is often invisible) is needful at all times.

At the end of verse three the word *Selah*, (pronounced SEE LAH) appears. It's just one word but it is a very important word that some bible translations omit. In the 28 translations I looked at, in all but five *Selah* appeared. Two of the 23 used the word "interlude" and one used the word "pause." It even appears in the Masoretic Text which is the authoritative Hebrew and Aramaic Text of the 24 books of Tanakh for Rabbinic Judaism. It was primarily copied, edited and distributed by a group of Jews known as the Masoretes between the 7th and 10th centuries of the Common Era (CE).

In fact *Selah* occurs 74 times in the Bible. It occurs 71 times in the Psalms and three times in Habakkuk. It is found in the poetical books of the Old Testament. "Thirty-one of the thirty-nine Psalms that include the word *Selah* are titled, 'to the choirmaster,' which seems to connect this word to musical notation,"

The exact definition is hard to pin down but the majority of the definitions agree that we should pause and think about what we have just read. So, I encourage you when you see the word *SELAH*, STOP and think on the verses that precede it. In the Scriptures *Selah* is used as a literary technique to cause the reader to meditate on God's word.

Join us for a virtual prayer meeting on Wednesdays at 7:00pm.

Wednesday Bible Study ([Click Here](#))

Meeting ID: 899 2251 1230

Password: 409807

One tap mobile

+13126266799

Meeting ID: 899 2251 1230

Password: 409807



The Watchman's Notes
Offering biblical messages, perspectives
and views on

Biblical & moral issues and current
events.

A Ministry of Chuck Vitel, Pastor – Bible
Teacher

"For thus the Lord said to me: Go, set a
watchman; let him announce what he
sees." Isaiah 21:6 [ESV]

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"The Reality of Evil and Spiritual
Warfare"

[Looking into the Unseen World]
Part 2

Ephesians 6:10-18 (NIV)

Contrary to popular thinking: Evil is NOT an illusion. Sickness is NOT an illusion. And even death is NOT an illusion. It's all REAL.

Evil is not a "thing" – like a rock or electricity. You can't have a jar of evil! Rather, evil is something that occurs. Evil has no existence of its own. It is really a lack in a good thing. For example, we call the absence of dirt, a hole – but it (the hole) cannot be separated from the dirt. So, when God created, it is true that everything that existed was good. One of the good things that God made was creatures who had the freedom to choose good. In order to have a real choice, God had to allow there to be something besides good to choose. Therefore, God allowed free angels and humans to choose good or non-good (evil).

a. There is a Natural (physical world type) Evil.

This is an Impersonal, External, Physical, & Temporal evil that exists in the form of diseases/illnesses, viruses, disasters, catastrophes, earthquakes, floods, hurricanes; the kinds of things that come from the physical world.

The whole natural world is blighted by bad things – it is broken: we have things that make you sick, things that injure you, things that kill you. And all of humanity, since the Fall of Man, has lived at the mercy of this "Natural Evil" or corruption.

b. Second, there's a Moral Evil. Moral evil is Personal, (as opposed to Natural evil, which is impersonal). Moral evil is Internal, and it is Spiritual. It is things such as; murder, terrorism, violence, war, wickedness, sin, greed, hatred, pride, rape, racism, lying, deceit, greed, adultery, transgression, iniquity, etc., whatever term you want to use for it. It is a bent, it is a disposition. It is an attitude, it is a course of thinking, speaking and conduct which dominates the human race to the point that Scripture says, "No one is good, not even one" (Romans 3:10).

Scripture says that, "it is out of the heart that lust conceives and produces sin and from that sin comes death." The Bible tells us that society is dominated by corruption & moral evil. A disaster may kill us physically, but if we miss [avoid] all the disasters and all the diseases, we will still die (physically & spiritually) because "the wages of sin is death." The corruption comes to every human being. It impacts every life, every relationship. All of humanity is made up of sinners, no one is exempt.

c. Third, there is "Supernatural Evil." This is the evil that is basically perpetrated by Satan, his Demons or Fallen Angels. (Revelation 12) states "that a third of the angels, one-third are fallen - leaving two thirds remaining as holy angels." Satan is one of those fallen angels

- and the whole world, as (1 John 5:19) says, "lies in the lap of the evil one." These vile beings are as old as creation. They are wicked. They ply their trade of wickedness on an angelic level and also on a human level. IMAGINE in the future, what it will be like, when God casts them all into the earth in the future time of the Great Tribulation.

Satan [the Devil] has a temporary and delegated sovereignty over this world system - so that even as Believers, as St. Paul said in, (Ephesians 6), "We are not, wrestling against flesh and blood - but against principalities and powers and the rulers of the darkness and authorities in high places that are wicked." There is a massive, spiritual struggle going on in this world system effected by Demons. They have the power to seduce and deceive humanity against God and against the gospel and against Scripture and to draw humanity deeper and deeper and deeper into immorality and iniquity. So, yes there is evil in this world! And it's not a marginal evil and it's not a minimal evil. There is a pervasive, dominant evil.

Meanwhile, The Spiritual Battle Goes on all around us.

We live in a world of WAR! A generation ago – a great preacher by the name of Donald Grey Barnhouse wrote a book called The Invisible War, in which he traced the battle lines from the beginning to the end. His conclusion: It is a battle between:

- Light and darkness
- Good and evil
- God and Satan
- Angels and demons

And we, God's human creation, we are on the battlefield! The visible battlefield has spanned the entire surface of the earth and has touched every human being, and it is fought in multiple dimensions, some of which are beyond the spectrum visible to the human eye – called the unseen world. The Battle is

underway – wherever you live, work, worship, or play. We are on the front lines.

How else can one explain what happens today or what is happening in our world today, besides just blaming the sin nature of mankind? This war is different from all other wars – not only because of its sheer magnitude and scope – but also because this war is fought in a place we have never seen.

“Spiritual warfare is the cosmic conflict waged in the invisible, spiritual realm but simultaneously fleshed out in the visible, physical realm.” [Pastor/Author Tony Evans, Victory in Spiritual Warfare]

To put it another way, the root of the war is something you cannot see, but the effects of the war are clearly seen and felt. This is because everything physical is either influenced or caused by *something spiritual*. Behind every physical disturbance, setback, ailment, or issue we face - lies a spiritual root. *Unless we identify and deal with the root spiritual cause, our attempts to fix the physical problem will provide only temporary relief at best.*

The Bible gives us only glimpses of the spirit world – *but we are told what we need to know!* (Book of Daniel Chapters 10-12) give us a fascinating look at the unseen world of good and bad or evil spirits. Our Adversary [The Devil/Satan] is cruel and cunning, *with many weapons at his disposal and many soldiers ready to do his bidding. If we do not see it or hear it, it is only because the battle is being fought in the realm of the spiritual.*

The Tactics of this War

The enemy’s goal is to divide and discourage. Satan’s goal is to *discourage you* so that you feel like giving up. *You see, the ideal war is one in which no one realizes war is being waged, which is mostly invisible [like the war of Terrorism today].* There are no Rules - Satan doesn’t fight fair – he doesn’t observe the *traditional rules of warfare.* He uses anything and everything that he can to bring us down. (Ephesians 6:11)

talks about “*the schemes of the devil.*” Schemes > means “traps” or “tricks” or “tactics.” Most instruments of general warfare are “*fists, knives, spears, guns, tanks, bombs, etc.*”

But within the realm of mortal men fighting in spiritual warfare – the most powerful weapons are, “ideas expressed in words and made manifest by our actions.” Ideas touch and transforms human beings: their minds, their hearts, their souls and their spirits.

It is crucial that every Christian understands that he/she is in this spiritual battle daily. There is no way to get around it. Not only is awareness important but so is vigilance, preparedness, courage and *having the right weapons to fight or engage in spiritual warfare.*

In the words of St. Paul in (2 Corinthians 10:3–5) [ESV], “*For though we walk in the flesh, we are not waging war according to the flesh. For the WEAPONS of our warfare are not of the flesh, but have divine power to destroy STRONGHOLDS. We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ.*”

The word “Strongholds” is found “only once” in the N.T., used metaphorically by Paul [vs. 4] in a description of the Christian’s spiritual battle. We are to destroy opinions & speculations – which comes from the Greek word, “logismos,” meaning “*ideas, concepts, opinions, reasonings, and philosophies.*” These all become fortresses or strongholds. It is clear that “our warfare” as Christians is spiritual. We are not fighting a physical battle or a human battle. *It is on a spiritual level—* and If we attempt to fight the spiritual battle with human weapons, we will fail and the enemy will be victorious.

(Ephesians 6:10-12) tells us, “*we can only stand strong in the Lord’s power because our Battle is ultimately against spiritual forces of EVIL in the world. And it is God’s Armor that protects us.*”_Our weapons

are those of the “Full armor of God” (Ephesians 6:13-18) – and consists of:

- the “Belt of Truth” buckled around our waist,
- with the “Breastplate of righteousness” in place [right living].
- and with our feet fitted with readiness that comes from the Gospel of Peace.
- We are also to take up the “Shield of Faith,” which we can use to extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one.
- the “Helmet of our salvation”
- and our ultimate “Offensive” spiritual weapon is the “Sword of the Spirit”, the Scriptures, the Word of God.
- and by praying in the Spirit.

Remember, the kind of spiritual battle that every Christian engages in - is primarily a battle of the mind and heart. Our Power comes from God – and God’s plan is to demolish all spiritual strongholds in our life. And our only offensive weapon—is the Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God (The Bible) (Ephesians 6:17).

Concluding Thoughts & Application

There are two primary errors when it comes to spiritual warfare: Over-emphasis and Under-emphasis, or too much focus & too little focus. Some people are too quick to blame every sin, every conflict, and every problem on the Devil or demons that need to be cast out. [WRONG APPROACH!] Others completely ignore the spiritual realm and the fact that the Bible tells us our battle is against spiritual powers. [WRONG AGAIN!] An unbalanced focus on demonic powers or the spirit world is not healthy and does not glorify God.

The key to successful spiritual warfare is “finding the biblical balance.” Example: Jesus sometimes cast demons out of people; other times He healed people with no mention of the demonic. The apostle Paul instructs Christians to first, wage war against “the sin in themselves” (Romans 6) and next, warns us to oppose

the schemes of the devil. (Ephesians 6:10–18). We are to rest in the fact that we are *declared righteous [Justified]* because of Christ's sacrifice on the Cross for us.

We are to proclaim [Preach] the Gospel - no matter how much resistance we face. We are not to waver in our faith, trusting God's promises no matter how strongly we are attacked. Jesus is our ultimate example of resisting temptation in spiritual warfare. When Jesus was confronted by the Devil in the Wilderness and tempted (Matthew 4:1–11) - each temptation was answered with the words, "It is written. *"The Word of the living God is the most powerful weapon against the temptations of the devil."* The Psalmist said in (Psalm 119:11); "I have hidden your word in my heart - so that I might not sin against you"

Another word of caution concerning spiritual warfare: Nowhere in the BIBLE are we ever instructed to cast out demons or even to speak to them. When we start talking to the devil, we run the risk of being led astray as Eve was (Genesis 3:1–7). Our focus should be on God, not demons; we speak to Him, not them.

In summary, we live in a real world where our good and evil actions have *direct* consequences and *indirect* consequences upon us and those around us. God's desire is that for all of our sakes we would obey Him that it might be well with us (Deuteronomy 5:20). Live life as if both Heaven and Hell are real (just as Good & Evil exist).

Keep in mind that Jesus didn't die to save us from a nonexistent Hell; He died to save us from the real danger of spending eternity in Hell, apart from God, experiencing the profound suffering that happens when people are separated from their Creator. Therefore, let your belief & knowledge of the Devil & Hell motivate you to pursue God more, and to warn others about Hell. Amen!

Pastor Vitel's message this week, is filled with timely take-aways that we need to face during this current time in our lives. We are currently battling an invisible enemy in the coronavirus. This invisible enemy is causing some individuals' faith to be shaken while others are questioning, "How could God let this happen?" Or is it Satan inflicting Gods people? Since medieval Europe folklore, bats have been painted as Satanic. The Pope even tweeted, "When we are in a state of sin, we are like 'human bats' who can move about only at night. We find it easier to live in darkness because the light reveals to us what we do not want to see. But then our eyes grow accustomed to darkness and we no longer recognize the light." He was referring to the dialogue between Nicodemus and Jesus, who tries to explain how some people, on the wrong path in life, find it easier to stay in the dark than face up to their evil deeds. Whatever side is taken the faith aspect takes center stage.

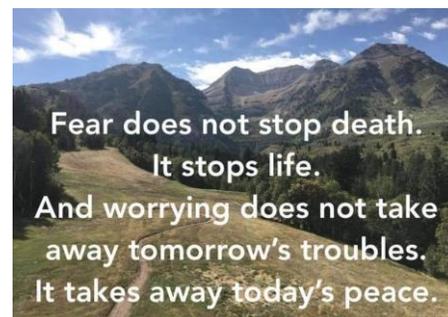
We need to choose the right weapons if we are going to be successful. emphasizing what Pastor Vitel said, "It is clear that "our warfare" as Christians is spiritual. We are not fighting a physical battle or a human battle. *It is on a spiritual level—* and If we attempt to fight the spiritual battle with human weapons, we will fail and the enemy will be victorious."

We are in a battle and victory will be determined by how prepared we are to meet the enemy. Love is our most powerful weapon in spreading the gospel and counteracting the evil around us. We can be prepared by adhering to these five points.

1. **Pray:** Praying for guidance and compassion as you evangelize will strengthen your resolve. Praying for your enemies will prevent hardness of heart during difficult times.
2. **Sacrifice:** Sacrifice puts your needs after the needs of another. It may be simple or

great, but it always needs to be done humbly.

3. **Show Grace:** Showing grace to others by forgiving is an example of the forgiveness Jesus gave us.
4. **Giving of Time, Talent and Treasure:** All we have was given to us by God. We are merely stewards of the time, talent and treasure that we have. Our purpose is to be good stewards of what God has given us to advance His kingdom.
5. **Sharing the Gospel:** Sharing the Gospel is the hardest part for most people, but it's the best way to show Christlike love.





PRAYER LIST

✓ Continuing Prayers for loss:

All the families that have lost loved ones this past year. Remember those who have recently lost loved ones due to COVID 19. The family of Mary Grace Reyes.

✓ Continuing Prayers for physical needs:

Maria Hatfield, Erwin and Elizabeth Lickman, **Gloria-Lynn Fernandez special request**, Betty Matson, Ronaldo Claveria, Anne Benliro's co-worker's husband—Oscar with Covid-19.

✓ Continuing Prayers for our Ministry Needs:

The Pastoral Search Committee, Pulpit Supply, Our Deacons, Financial support of the church during the Virus

✓ Continuing Prayers for our Sister Ministries:

BIEM Ministries, Orchard Church, Pastors Davis, Billow, Eddy Bartolome, Pastor Chuck and Sue Vitel

✓ Continuing Prayers for Spiritual Needs:

Leonard Hatfield, Carol Pelfrey's family, Daniel Ruehlman

✓ Continuing Prayers for:

The spread of the Gospel, Our Government, Our Nation, Our Community, Our Neighbors, Our Families, Erwin & Elizabeth Lickman living together at The Wellshire Nursing Home

Mylin and Errol Lardizabal - Are both nurses and Errol did get assigned to work in ICU to take care of Covid patients, he will have to work on the unit for at least a month.

Liza Mitchell in her role as a health care worker at Vi Independent and Assisted Living Facility she has responsibility over those with Covid 19 .

Pray for our members that have lost employment and for those who still have jobs and need to interact with others on a daily basis. Pray for those still working that God will protect.

Rita McManus - Has been under the weather. Visited doctor. Reported NO Covid19.

George Bizadellis – Salvation. Brian has been witnessing to him.

Lift up all our health professionals and their families who are on the front line of this pandemic.

Carmen Pearson – Her younger sister passed away. Pray for Carmen and her family.

George Sargis as he recovers from eye surgery.

If you have prayer requests or updates on your family, we encourage to submit them to the Newsletter email address at the end of this newsletter.

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