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HAVE YOU EVER SEEN "THE WAR"?

... Or have you only seen some soldiers in military uniforms?

War is conflict. Essentially war boils down to someone wanting to have or to own something that belongs to someone else. As the Apostle James explained:

From whence *come* wars and fightings among you? *come they* not hence, *even* of your lusts that war in your members? **You lust**, and have not: you kill, and **desire to have**, and cannot obtain: you fight and war, yet you have not, because you ask not. (James 4:1-2)

This principle holds true for all wars ... lusting for something that belongs to someone else, or over which someone else has asserted ownership.

It was Satan who lusted for the power and the status and the prestige that belong to God the Creator. And so Satan had said to himself that he wanted to take over God's position and status.

I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; **I will be like the most High.** (Isaiah 14:14)

To try to achieve this ambition, Satan organized all the angels under his authority into an army. Then Satan started the very first war by rising up from this planet Earth "above the heights of the clouds" and attacking God's specific location in heaven.

The result was war in heaven.

And there had been war in heaven: Michael and his angels had fought against the dragon; and **the dragon had fought and his angels** (Revelation 12:7)

We know the outcome of that war. Satan was conclusively defeated. In fact, his defeat had really been a foregone conclusion. Nobody can defeat the Creator God. Satan had become extremely covetous, and a covetous mind is always, without exception, **an irrational and illogical mind**. Keep this in mind if you ever have to deal with covetous people.

Now Satan's mind had been permanently warped into wanting to have what belongs to someone else (i.e. what belongs to God). The mindset of wanting things, tangible or intangible, that belong to someone else represents a conflict that will always lead to war. **A spirit of competition is a spirit of war**, even if it may not seem that way to us.

War is the absence of peace. As long as we want what belongs to someone else, or we want abilities and status and power that other people have, we do not have real peace. Without contentment there is no real peace. And when there is no real peace, then that is the precursor to a state of war.

In the Family of God, which God the Father and Jesus Christ are in the process of building, there will always be 100% absolute and unconditional contentment. It cannot be any other way. No member of the Family of God can ever have even the slightest hint of a feeling that says: **I wish I had what someone else has, I wish I had their job or their position or their abilities**. That would be like the hand saying that it would rather be a foot or an eye or a nose. And such a mindset can never achieve real

contentment. And it cannot exist within the Family of God.

God Almighty cannot afford to have any member in His Family who would even remotely entertain that type of thought. God cannot have anyone in His Family whose mind is desirous of **personal advancement** and promotion. It just wouldn't work ... and it would sooner or later lead to war. The Family of God must be one unified body with absolute peace, contentment and acceptance amongst all. Think of it this way: **a hand will always be a hand for as long as it exists**; it can never become a foot or an eye. A hand has to fully accept its purpose for existence, which is to function like a hand, without competing with the foot or the eye for preeminence.

A human body could not possibly function correctly if a toe wished that it was an ear, or if a tooth wished it was an eye. Each part of the human body must **fully embrace the function** for which it was placed in the body, or the body will break down. Likewise, every member in the Family of God must **fully embrace the purpose** for which God will place us within His Family.

All the holy angels of God fully embrace the functions for which God created them. But Satan and his demons, on the other hand, did not fully accept the functions for which God had created them; they wanted more ... and that led to war. **Wanting more leads to war.**

This principle also applies to the Family God is creating.

As Jesus Christ prayed:

Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on Me through their word; That they all may be one; as You, Father, *are* in Me, and I in You, **that they also may be one in Us**: that the world may believe that You have sent Me. (John 17:20-21)

When there is no unity, then there is conflict. And when there is conflict, then there is war.

Now once Satan had rebelled against God and then been thrown back down to this earth, **there was always going to be war on this earth**, in one form or another, **until Satan and his demons are permanently removed** from the total environment that God has created. And so eventually Satan and the demons will be cast into "the blackness of darkness forever" (Jude 1:13), i.e. it will be an absolute separation from God and from God's environment.

All of humanity is living in **a permanent state of war**. This state of war has been with us since the day we were born. That war is fought very viciously, but it is not fought with physical weapons. And it is not primarily fought on the physical level.

That war is fought primarily in the human mind. And that war starts in very early childhood, at a time when Satan has a staggering advantage over the small child's developing brain and personality.

So let me ask you a question:

Have you personally ever been in a situation where the thought suddenly hit you: wait a minute! I am being attacked **right now** by Satan! I can't see him, and I can't feel him, but this situation and its ramifications that I am facing right now has "Satan" written all over it. Or has a thought like that never before crossed your mind in any situation?

Yes, physically it is just another man or another woman that I am dealing with right now. But the person is so **obviously irrational** (i.e. their conduct is not based on ignorance of the facts, but on irrationality, or

even on undisguised rebellion against God's standards) in their attitude of wanting to hurt me or harm me or cause me problems, that it is a glaring tell-tale sign of Satan, the most irrational being in existence, wanting to attack me and to destroy me. And the person I am dealing with is at the same time totally oblivious to their own irrationality, unable to see how they are being used by Satan to try to get at me.

Consider the man Job.

Every single one of the calamities that hit Job (i.e. all his wealth being stolen or destroyed, and all his children being killed, and the severe physical pain he was enduring) was caused directly by Satan. Nothing in Job's case was "time and chance". **Satan attempted to destroy Job**. But throughout this trial Job never recognized: wait a minute, I am being ferociously attacked by Satan.

While he was going through this trial, that thought just didn't occur to Job. If anything, **Job felt that God was responsible** for his problems ... until Job came to a real changing of his mind (i.e. until he came to repentance). See Job 6:4, Job 9:17 ("He multiplies my wounds **without cause**"), etc. for Job's wrong assumption that God was responsible for his problems. Job had not done anything to deserve the problems that came upon him. Job's problems were due entirely to **the war that Satan was waging against him**. God had not caused any of Job's problems.

Now, unlike Job, most of the problems that come upon you and me are due to our own foolish or careless speech or actions, right? And the Apostle Peter referred to this point in his letter, because it is such a common matter.

For what glory *is it*, if, **when you be buffeted for your faults**, you shall take it patiently? but if, when you do well, and suffer *for it*, you take it patiently, this *is* acceptable with God. (1 Peter 2:20)

Here the Greek word translated as "buffeted" literally means: to be hit with the fist, to be treated with violence. The word translated as "faults" refers to transgressing God's laws and falling short in our conduct.

So according to Peter the things we ourselves do will at times hit us in the face, so to speak. And then such occasions are not due to "the war". Then such occasions are only a matter of cause and effect ... when we reap the consequences of our own behavior and our own actions.

"But when **we do well and suffer for it**", to quote Peter's words, then we are involved in the war with Satan. And that is when we actually need to "see the war" in which we are enmeshed, i.e. recognize it for what it is.

Let's notice the things the Apostle Paul explained.

PAUL'S EXPLANATION

Paul could see that war very clearly. He knew that in his own mind he was engaged in a fight to the death. Paul recognized the conflict in his own mind.

For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I. (Romans 7:15)

He then elaborated:

For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) dwells no good thing: for to will is present with me; but *how* to

perform that which is good I find not. (Romans 7:18)

And Paul realized that **a war was going on in his own mind**. That war was between two opposite ways of using his mind. Paul referred to each of these two opposite ways of using his mind as "a law".

I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: (Romans 7:21-22)

Then Paul identified the war.

But I see another law in my members, **warring against the law of my mind**, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. (Romans 7:23)

One thing Paul points out very clearly in this verse is that the war takes place **in our own minds**. But we should also recognize that in this war we are in fact fighting against an alliance of **two distinct enemies**.

Enemy #1 is "the law of sin which is in our members". This enemy we can also refer to as "**a spirit of selfishness**", where everything in life is seen through a lens of selfishness. It is an attitude of competition, always wanting to advance self in some way, even when it is at the expense of other people. This attitude takes advantage of every opportunity to promote self, to get more for self. This is the enemy Paul has focused on here in Romans 7. Our own selfish spirit is our first enemy. James identified this enemy for us in James 4:1-2, which verses we have already looked at.

Enemy #2 is **Satan** who has formed an alliance with our spirit of selfishness. And in this alliance Satan becomes "the senior partner", the driving force, the dictator. Satan's involvement intensifies our spirit of selfishness. These two enemies are united in their hatred for "the law of God after the inward man", which law dwells within the mind of every truly converted Christian.

And so it is war to the death!

Paul referred to enemy #2 in his other letters. For example:

For though we walk in the flesh, **we do not war after the flesh**: (For the weapons of **our warfare** are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) (2 Corinthians 10:3-4)

Let's notice what Paul explained to the Ephesian people in the Church.

EPHESIANS 6:12 EXAMINED

For we wrestle not **against** flesh and blood, but **against** principalities, **against** powers, **against** the rulers of the darkness of this world, **against** spiritual wickedness in high *places*. (Ephesians 6:12)

This is not a particularly accurate translation of the Greek text. Here is the Greek text for this verse, transliterated into our alphabet.

hoti ouk estin hemin he pale **pros** aima kai sarka alla **pros** tas archas **pros** tas exousias **pros** tous kosmokratoras tou skotous tou aionos toutou **pros** ta pneumatika tes ponerias en tois epouraniois. (Greek text of Ephesians 6:12, transliterated)

[Okay, I know, it's all Greek to you, right? I feel the same way. :-)]

For a start, in our translation we have the word "against" five times. In each place it is the Greek preposition "**pros**". "Pros" is used 726 times in the Greek NT text, and it is translated as "against" only 24 times, or barely more than 3% of the time. In over 96% of the places where "pros" is used, it does not mean "against". In fact, about 84% of the time "pros" is appropriately translated as "**unto, to, with, for**".

The translators here chose to translate it as "against" because of the word "wrestling". Wrestling is readily described as being "against" someone. But here this Greek preposition would be better translated as "with". Think of Genesis 32:24 in the Old Testament, where "**a man**" **wrestled with Jacob** until the breaking of the day, rather than wrestling "against" Jacob.

Next, where we have the verb "we wrestle" in our English text, the Greek text does not contain a verb for "wrestle" at all. Instead, the Greek text has **the noun** "pale", which word is only used this one time in the NT, and this noun means "wrestling".

Next, "**tas archas**", which is translated as "principalities", is the plural of "arche", and it means "the beginners, **the first ones**, those who started something".

Next, the expression "tous kosmokratoras tou skotous tou aionos", translated as "the rulers of the darkness of this world", literally means "**the world rulers of the darkness of this age**". This is speaking about the spirit beings who rule this whole present world.

Lastly, the expression "ta pneumatika tes ponerias en tois epouraniois", translated as "spiritual wickedness in high *places*", actually means "**depraved spirits in heavenly *places***". In other words, where "high places" could perhaps refer to human beings in positions of high authority, "depraved spirits in **heavenly *places***" cannot refer to any human beings. This can only refer to evil spirits (Satan and his demons), who have the ability to move through the air, and who had originally come from heavenly "places".

So putting the whole verse together, we get something like:

"Our wrestling is not with blood and flesh, but **with the first ones (who rebelled against God)**, with powers and authorities, with world rulers of the darkness of this age, with depraved spirits in heavenly *places*."

[Comment: I have here reversed the words "flesh and blood" because in the Greek text they are reversed, and the Greek reads "blood and flesh".]

Paul's focus is that we are not wrestling with other human beings, who would obviously be flesh and blood. Our real fight is with **Satan and his demons**, who have ensconced themselves in all the positions of high authority in this present dark age, of which age Satan happens to be "the god" (see 2 Corinthians 4:4). They are the ones who started to challenge God's power and authority. They are **the real "world rulers" of this present age**.

ARMIES HAVE UNIFORMS

Armies typically have uniforms. A uniform does not identify the war; it only identifies which of the two sides you are on. Our uniform in this war consists of: the weekly Sabbath, the annual Feasts and Holy Days, adherence to God's dietary laws, and God's whole way of life.

When we accept this way of life, then we are putting on the uniform which identifies us as a part of the

army that opposes Satan's army. And so **our uniform readily attracts enemy fire**, because our uniform is easily recognized by the spirit beings that control this present evil age, and who then proceed to mobilize their forces against us.

The people of God wear their uniforms openly for all to see, and we then abide very strictly by all the rules laid out in the Geneva Convention (in analogy) regarding how to deal with our enemies. Satan's army, by contrast, consists of terrorists who disguise themselves, and who use hostages against us, and who break all the rules with contempt, and who lie every step of the way. **That's the war in which we are involved with Satan.**

Now in a war victories are won by both sides. When it gets to the point where one side always wins and never loses a battle, then the war is over, because the other side has been soundly defeated. In our war that point will be reached when Jesus Christ has "put down all rule, and all authority and power" (see 1 Corinthians 15:24). But that point is still far into the future, beyond the millennium.

So to get back to our original question: in our war we have all seen soldiers in military uniforms, because we have seen other people who also strive to live by God's laws. But by itself that doesn't give us a view of the actual war. For us to "war a good warfare" (see 1 Timothy 1:18) requires us to identify a **battle** with Satan while that battle is raging.

It requires us to recognize when we have walked into **an ambush** set for us by Satan. It requires us to recognize when **an offensive** is being launched against us. It requires us to recognize when Satan has thrown a hand grenade in our direction. It requires us to clearly recognize **the absolute irrationality** of those who fight against us. And it requires us to recognize **the intense hatred** for the ways of God and for everything that stands for the true God.

When we are able to recognize these things, **then we are beginning to see the actual war.**

And I mean "see it" as clearly as the Apostle Paul could see that war. I mean, we can see beyond the human beings we are actually dealing with, to the point of **discerning** the evil spirits who are using those human beings at that specific point in time to try to harm us in some way.

WOULD YOU EVER ARGUE WITH SATAN?

I assume you would reply: no, of course I would never argue with Satan, because I know that Satan is a devious liar, and it is impossible to reason with Satan. Okay, that's fine. We should **never try to reason with Satan.**

But this reveals the necessity for us to recognize when we are engaged in a serious battle with Satan. **If we don't see such situations for what they really are**, then we will be greatly tempted to try to reason with those who ambushed us on Satan's behalf, and who are the foot-soldiers in Satan's offensive against us. To try to reason with those who launch a Satan-inspired attack against us, along the lines of the attack Satan had launched against the man Job, represents the height of futility.

If we are attacked by Satan, who uses human beings as his foot-soldiers against us, then we must recognize that attack for what it is ... or we are likely to respond in weak and ineffective ways to such attacks. We must recognize the real enemy. That's when it is imperative that we understand that our fight is not with flesh and blood.

In such attacks we not only need to recognize Satan and his tactics against us. We also need to learn to

recognize **the officers in Satan's army**. Those would be the human beings who are the instigators, and who give the orders to others to in some way attack us. They are the ones who give the orders to the foot-soldiers. In some cases those "officers" may even know us personally, or they may even be some of our relatives (along the lines of Matthew 10:35-36).

Think of the picture we are given in Revelation 12:15.

And the serpent cast out of his mouth **water as a flood** after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away of the flood. (Revelation 12:15)

The officers in Satan's army are the ones who either trigger serious persecution, or they are the ones who implement Satan's instructions, by sending out Satan's foot-soldiers against the people of God. Revelation 12:15 is speaking about a particular phase of the endless war that Satan has been waging for over 6,000 years already against human beings in general, and against God's people in particular. That war will only end when Jesus Christ eventually puts down "all rule and all authority and power" (1 Corinthians 15:24 again).

IN WAR PEOPLE GET KILLED

In a war many people die. And in our war Satan seeks to destroy us, by taking from us the opportunity to live for all future eternity in the Family of God. Here is the Apostle Peter's warning for us.

Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walks about, seeking **whom he may devour**: (1 Peter 5:8)

Speaking for our age: in the past half century very many people have indeed been "devoured" by Satan. Many have fallen away from the commitment they had made to God. And many are right now in the process of being "devoured". So far we have suffered a high number of casualties. Where others around us have fallen, we have to keep standing to show ourselves faithful to God.

Whom **resist steadfast in the faith**, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world. (1 Peter 5:9)

In order to resist, we first have to recognize that we are being attacked. We have to be able to discern the war that is being fought over **how we will use our minds**.

Paul instructed Timothy to fight this war.

This charge I commit unto you, son Timothy, according to the prophecies which went before on you, that you by them might **war a good warfare**; (1 Timothy 1:18)

When we came to repentance and then accepted God's whole way of life, we were putting on the uniform that identifies us as soldiers on God's side. But most of the time most of us don't recognize the battles that have taken place. We don't recognize that we have walked into another ambush, which Satan has set specifically for us. Mostly we are like soldiers in a peace-time army, walking around in our uniforms, but oblivious to the real source of the attacks we are trying to deal with. We don't even identify those attacks for what they really are ... Satan's efforts to destroy us.

Recall the prayer of the Prophet Elisha:

And Elisha prayed, and said, LORD, I pray You, open his eyes, that he may see. And the LORD opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw: and, behold, **the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha.** (2 Kings 6:17)

We all know the story here. And that invisible army is **always there for us as well**, whenever we face another attack from Satan. Our responsibility is to not give in to a spirit of fear in such attacks. Rather, we must "resist the devil" (James 4:7) by freely submitting to God ... and then God's invisible army will put Satan to flight for us.

KNOW YOUR ENEMY

It is extremely important that we learn to correctly identify Satan's attacks on us individually. We must learn to identify our enemy correctly. Oh sure, we all know that Satan is our real enemy, but by itself that does not help us to identify **a specific attack** from Satan. For example, look at Job 1:16.

While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, **The fire of God is fallen from heaven**, and hath **burned up the sheep**, and the servants, and consumed them; and I only am escaped alone to tell you. (Job 1:16)

The truth is that this was not at all "the fire of God"! This was a blatant attack on Job by Satan. Would we recognize something like this as an attack from Satan ... **or would we also blame God for such an event?**

How about verse 17?

While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, **The Chaldeans** made out three bands, and fell upon **the camels**, and **have carried them away**, yea, and slain the servants with the edge of the sword; and I only am escaped alone to tell you. (Job 1:17)

Would we recognize an event like this as a brazen attack by Satan? Or would we just focus on the enemy gangs that stole our possessions?

How about verses 18-19?

While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, **your sons and your daughters** were eating and drinking wine in their eldest brother's house: And, behold, there came a great wind from the wilderness (i.e. **a tornado**), and smote the four corners of the house, and it fell upon the young men, and **they are dead**; and I only am escaped alone to tell you. (Job 1:18-19)

The killing of Job's children was entirely due to Satan's attack on Job. But Job did not understand that. So what about us? **Would we correctly identify some kind of personal tragedy like this as a vicious attack from Satan?** Or would we believe that it was time and chance that this particular tornado just happened to destroy our children and/or our possessions?

God has given us these examples in the Book of Job to show us that **all these things are typically ways in which Satan destroys some people** who are not protected by godly "hedges" around their families and around their earthly possessions.

[Comment: The three "hedges" are thoroughly explained in my November 2014 article "How Satan Influences People". See that article for more details.]

God wants us to understand that when things like this afflict certain families, then **that is not "time and chance"** (see Ecclesiastes 9:11)! The problem with Solomon's comment in Ecclesiastes 9:11 is that Solomon didn't really see Satan in the picture. Check the whole Book of Ecclesiastes. And without Satan as one of the key players in the overall picture regarding the human life experience, Solomon erroneously attributed some things to "time and chance" which should correctly be attributed to Satan.

That's the point God is showing us in Job chapter 1. God shows us that Satan uses attacking armies, and criminals, and at times certain weather conditions, to attack specific people. But when this is the case we seldom see "the war", because **we look upon these things as "time and chance"**.

[Note! This does not necessarily apply when the affected people themselves engage in foolish or dangerous conduct, when the adversity that follows is a direct consequence of their conduct or actions.]

We need to clearly understand that **the ways in which Satan attacked Job** reveal to us the ways in which Satan will attack any and all people who are not protected by **God's three "hedges"**. Such losses and calamities are not really "time and chance"; they are really expressions of how Satan rules his present evil world. But we are usually very reluctant to assign such calamities to the "god" of this present age. We are much more comfortable with assigning such catastrophes to "natural disasters", which take us back to Solomon's limiting "time and chance" perspective.

[Comment: The fact that Satan, the "god" of this present age, does not feature at all in the Book of Ecclesiastes, is obviously a major omission, which will skew the greater picture in a major way. The result is a rather unbalanced picture. See my 2001 article "Understanding the Writings of Solomon" for further discussion of this subject.]

One of God's purposes in recording these events for us is to show us that the things Satan did to Job, Satan will also do to any other human being who is not protected by God's "three hedges".

To open our eyes somewhat, we need to examine everything Satan did to Job. Then we need to ask ourselves: **can we find parallels** to Satan's attacks on Job at any points in past history? And can we find parallels to what happened to Job amongst the people whom we know personally? Or, to go one step further, can we perhaps find parallels to those calamities in our own lives and in our own personal experiences with friends and relatives?

Now if we can indeed discern **some clear parallels to what Satan did to Job**, then we are starting to see a little bit more of "the war" that Satan is waging against us. Those things are not "time and chance", not when Satan also just happens to be "the god" of this present evil age, and when we just happen to be the people who seek to obey all of God's laws.

What happened to Job was most certainly not "time and chance", and when those exact same types of things happen in our world, then they are not "time and chance" either. **They show us how Satan rules his present realm.**

The only exceptions in this matter are those people and families who are protected by God's "three hedges". Satan does not rule their lives, and **Satan cannot penetrate those "hedges"**, unless God sometimes gives Satan some limited and temporary access through one or two or all three "hedges", and such limited access would then be for the purpose of testing us, the exact same purpose for which God temporarily allowed Satan to breach those "hedges" around Job.

However, the flip-side here is that we ourselves need to be extremely careful that we ourselves, by unwise actions and behavior, don't attempt to venture outside of those protective "hedges". When Satan knows that he cannot penetrate through those "hedges", then Satan may appeal to us with: hey, **why**

don't you come out here, I've got something to show you, that you will want to see. And that would obviously be just another ambush. So don't be naive like Eve.

In response to Elisha's prayer, God opened the eyes of the young man, so that the young man could see the army that was ready to instantly battle for God's servants. That army was ready to fight for God's people (i.e. in that case for Elisha) within a split-second. They were all on high alert.

Now if you are a truly converted Christian, and you have God's holy spirit within your mind, then right now the area around you is also "full of horses and chariots of fire", comprising an angelic army that is ready to protect you in an instant from any attacks by Satan or by anyone who may wish to harm you.

The way God protected Elisha in 2 Kings 6:17 from Satan's warfare is the same way that God will protect you and me in our war with Satan. 2 Kings 6:17 is recorded as an example for us. And that is how God also protected the Apostle Paul and all of God's people in the past.

Now while God protects us, at the same time God also allows us to experience tests and trials. So we should not mistake a trial that God allows us to experience for a lack of protection from God. Consider again the example of Elisha. The protection was there all along, but that angelic army was never called upon to actually fight for Elisha. In that situation it was enough for God to strike the Syrian army with blindness, and the situation was resolved quite peacefully.

Likewise, God's protection for all of God's people is there all along. We ourselves just may not see it or perceive it. But it is there all the time for every converted Christian. That army ensures that the "three hedges" around us stay firmly in place, apart from at times exposing us to certain tests and trials to help us to develop godly character.

So as you continue to live the Christian life, open you eyes, so that when you are ambushed by Satan, or when Satan launches a full-blown attack on you, or when he throws a spiritual hand grenade at you, then you will recognize that situation for what it really is ... war! And train yourself to recognize each attack that comes your way. Then you can become like the battle-hardened army scout of old, who could almost sense the enemy's still hidden presence, as he rode over the mountain or into the valley.

Open your eyes! The war is raging all around us!

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