

# When Spiritual Warfare Becomes Personal

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Genesis 14:1-14

Abraham returned to Canaan, from Egypt, and found himself in the middle of an international conflict. Four kings were battling five kings, and Abraham was living in the war zone. We can relate to Abraham's situation as we also live in a time in history in which we are surrounded by both, physical and spiritual conflict. I believe that all violence that is manifested in the physical realm is the result of violence in the spiritual realm. As believers, we need to realize that we are not helpless and casual observers to the conflicts that surround us. We have a significant role to play in the outcome of the spiritual conflict that spills over into the physical realm in which we live.

## Turmoil in the Ranks of the Powers of Darkness

Genesis 14 gives us conclusive evidence that the powers of darkness are even at war with themselves. All of the kings that were involved in this conflict were ungodly and pagan kings. One of the keys to understanding spiritual warfare is to realize that there is no unity among demons ... only authority. We need to remember that the power bestowed on these fallen angels has not been rescinded. Demons have a hatred that is uniformly vented towards God and His church. They have no other point of unity as there is no love, unity, peace, or friendship between them. Hollywood has misled the masses when it comes to their portrayal of spiritual matters. Satan and his demons will not rule over the region of the damned. They will be tormented for all of eternity just like all who have rejected God's gracious offer of salvation.

The lack of unity between demonic powers is actually very good news to us as believers. Consider the awesome power of unity as seen in the story of the Tower of Babel in Genesis 11:5-6, *The LORD came down to see the city and the tower which the sons of men had built. And the LORD said, "Indeed **the people are one and they all have one language, and this is what they begin to do; now nothing that they propose to do will be withheld from them.**"* Jesus spoke of the power of unity in Matthew 18:19, *Again I say to you that **if two of you agree on earth concerning anything that they ask, it will be done for them** by My Father in heaven.* As believers, we have been given the Name of Jesus to invoke in prayer when fighting spiritual battles. His Name will yield a greater authority than any other name, or any power of darkness, that we may encounter. Two believers, walking together in agreement, command a greater power than a multitude of demons. Demons are isolated from each other by their hatred for each other; therefore, they do not have the power of agreement working for them.

## When Warfare Turns Personal

Abraham's nephew, Lot, becomes a casualty of this regional conflict. Lot is captured and taken a prisoner of war in Genesis 14:10-12, *Now the Valley of Siddim was full of asphalt pits; and the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah fled; some fell there, and the remainder fled to the mountains. Then they took all the goods of Sodom and Gomorrah, and all their provisions, and went their way. They also took Lot, Abram's brother's son who dwelt in Sodom, and his goods, and departed.* Up to this point in time, this was nothing more than a regional war between a few disgruntled kings as far as Abraham was concerned. However, when they took Lot as a prisoner, this regional conflict became very personal.

We have all been touched by spiritual warfare that has manifested in the physical realm! We have all seen the aftermath of spiritual warfare in which people, and things precious to us, have been taken prisoners of war. We have seen our own health, or the health of those close to us, become a casualty of warfare. We can add to the list; finances, careers, friendships, family, and reputations and it won't take

long to see that circumstances have turned very personal. Now that spiritual warfare has become personal, we can't afford to just sit in indifference. We must consider the fate of who, and what, has been captured if our spiritual enemy is not defeated. Bottom line ... we cannot afford to rest until all captives have been set free. This is exactly the course that Abraham took when he set out to free Lot.

## Preparing for Battle

Abraham began to prepare for the battle of liberating Lot. He didn't stop and take the time to consider the odds or count the cost of such an endeavor for someone dear to his heart had been captured. The only thing that mattered to Abraham was getting Lot back safely. In mobilizing his servants to prepare for battle, Abraham was not naïve enough to place his trust in them. He knew the severity of this critical battle and would never just leave it in the hands of those who attended to his camels. We know from Scripture that Abraham was an "altar builder;" and as such, he had a history of witnessing God's unwavering faithfulness to him. Abraham was placing the full weight of his trust in God to help him deliver Lot from the enemy.

The first course of action that Abraham took was to arm his servants with weapons. Genesis 14:14 says that, *Now when Abram heard that his brother was taken captive, he armed his three hundred and eighteen trained servants who were born in his own house, and went in pursuit as far as Dan.* Just as Abraham gave his servants weapons for battle, so also God has given us weapons for spiritual warfare. The weapons we have been given are very powerful in defeating the work of the enemy. The weapons we have been given will set those who have been taken captive, free. The Apostle Paul addressed the power of our weapons to defeat our spiritual enemies in his letter to the Corinthian Church found in II Corinthians 10:3-5, *For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.*

We can stand in authority as we have a mighty arsenal of weapons to use in spiritual warfare:

- We have the authority** to use the Name of Jesus against our enemy;*
- We have the authority** to approach the Throne of God to seek His intervention;*
- We have the authority** to declare the promises of the Word of God in every situation;*
- We have the authority** to bind our enemy to the contract of Calvary's Cross;*
- We have the authority** to claim the miraculous power of the blood of our Savior;*
- We have the authority** to remind our enemy of his defeat as we place our trust in God;*
- We have the authority** to stop the encroachment of Hell's agenda through intercessory prayer;*
- We have the authority** to drive back the forces of darkness through praise and worship;*
- We have the authority** to stand in agreement and unity with our fellow believers.*

God has given us powerful weapons for spiritual warfare; He has also given us the armor necessary to stand in His victory. Paul encouraged the Church at Ephesus to daily put on the whole armor of God in Ephesians 6:10-18, *Be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. **Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand** against the wiles of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armor of God **that you may be able to withstand** in the evil day, and having done all, to **stand**. Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints.*

We also have the great promise recorded in Isaiah 54:17, *No weapon formed against you shall prosper, and every tongue which rises against you in judgment you shall condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD.* The Bible never promised that we will not be attacked; but the Bible does promise us that our enemies will not achieve their goal of defeating us. This is only true if we choose to put on the whole armor of God. We must use the weapons He has given to us to engage and defeat our spiritual enemies. Let me give you a word of advice ... don't go out to battle barefoot, wearing only gym shorts and a tee shirt! You will not fare well in the battle at hand!

The second course of action Abraham took was to prepare his servants for battle. In Genesis 14:15 we find that everyone was unified, *He divided his forces against them by night, and he and his servants attacked them and pursued them as far as Hobah, which is north of Damascus.* Notice, they all went into the battle together. Abraham's servants had been with him long enough to know how he thought and how he reacted to various situations. They also knew the strengths and weaknesses of their comrades. They shared common values and operated under common principles. On this premise of unity, it was easy for Abraham to train them and unify them around a common objective and goal.

I believe that "unity" or "like-mindedness" makes the difference between spiritual victory and spiritual defeat. When believers become disgruntled their unity is broken. They become vulnerable to defeat on a number of fronts by their spiritual enemy. This is especially true when believers give themselves to ceaseless squabbles in a church. One side may eventually win the argument, but both sides will lose when it comes to the greater purpose. The reason they lose is very simple ... their unity has been broken and their power of agreement has been nullified. This is why the Apostle Paul pleads with the young church at Philippi to tap into the power of agreement in Philippians 1:27-28, *Only let your conduct be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of your affairs, that you stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel, and not in any way terrified by your adversaries, which is to them a proof of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that from God.*

We must understand that our unity releases the power of the Holy Spirit to defeat the strongholds of that the enemy has taken captive. The power of unity and agreement will set the captives free!

**You *Must* Act Accordingly ... All Spiritual Warfare is Very Personal!**

**You *Must* Not Be Afraid ... Your Spiritual Enemy is Inferior to You!**

**You *Must* Use What You Have ... You Have Powerful Spiritual Weapons!**

**You *Must* Get Dressed ... The Armor of God will Protect You!**

***Don't Underestimate the Power of Agreement!***

***"One can chase a thousand and two shall put ten thousand to flight."***

**(Deuteronomy 32:30)**