



# STRATEGIC PRAYER

Equipping a New Generation of Spirit Filled Intercessors and Spiritual Warriors for High Level Advancement of God's Kingdom

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5-Fold Global

This work is dedicated to a new generation of leaders and believers raised up and anointed by God to fulfill the book of Acts in the power of the Holy Spirit and to the spiritual fathers and mothers called by God to nurture and equip them for multiplying the harvest through strategic prayer, power evangelism, Spirit filled discipleship and church planting aligned with God's word.

*All Scripture quotations, unless otherwise noted, are taken from the New King James Version (NKJV) of the Bible.*

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# Introduction

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Is there a higher and more strategic operational level of prayer for the church today? A growing number of church leaders around the world are beginning to see this. These teaching series have been prepared to help bring the call for a higher level of strategic prayer into a biblical and operational focus for these emerging leaders. After all, our prayers and our warfare are useless if not aligned with God's word. And where the word of God goes so goes the Spirit of God. I had this upon my heart in January 2017 when I wrote:

"The Holy Spirit is going to restore the word of God to its prominence in the church in 2017. The Spirit will cause God's word to run very swiftly through the land (Psalms 147:15). His Word will grow and multiply mightily in the power of the Holy Spirit (Acts 12:24). There will be outbreaks of revival in the nations."

Although the sovereignty of God must be acknowledged in every place and visitation, the role of strategic prayer cannot be minimized.

The more we understand and engage in the strategic levels of prayer, intercession, and warfare, the greater number of captives who will be set free for the glory of Christ. It is time to move beyond the basic levels of intercession. It is time to trust the Holy Spirit to lead us into a more effective dimension of prayer that will cause the clouds of darkness over cities and nations to tremble and run at the name of Jesus from the praying lips of His people. We need to study God's word to get thoroughly furnished for this strategic work.

These teachings will equip leaders to both instruct and engage the body of Christ in the higher levels of intercession and spiritual warfare. I've always held to the principle that instruction must be followed by activation. We learn best by doing. Those who follow Christ are not just hearers of the Word, but also doers! The church is filled with too many spectators today. This is about to change!

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# Table of Contents

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<b>Teaching Series #1: The Lord of Hosts .....</b>	<b>4</b>
What's in a Name.....	4
I Am.....	17
For the Sake of My Name .....	19
The Name of Jesus .....	22
<b>Teaching Series #2: Battle Array .....</b>	<b>28</b>
Introduction .....	28
The Armies of God .....	33
God's Armory.....	36
Angelic Ministry .....	50
Rules of Engagement .....	57
<b>Teaching Series #3: Strategic Patterns .....</b>	<b>61</b>
<i>Charash</i> Warriors.....	61
The Royal Battle Horse .....	68
Battle Formation.....	70
The Battle March .....	74
<b>Teaching Series #4: Strategic Prayer Initiatives .....</b>	<b>77</b>
Unity .....	77
Holy Spirit.....	80
Spiritual Knowledge and Understanding .....	81
Open Doors.....	83
Laborers .....	85
<b>Appendix 1: Types of Praying During Strategic Prayer Engagements .....</b>	<b>87</b>
<b>Appendix2: Characteristics of Strategic Prayer Engagements.....</b>	<b>88</b>
<b>Bibliography .....</b>	<b>89</b>

# Teaching Series #1: The Lord of Hosts

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## What's in a Name?

There are several examples in the Bible where God names or changes a person's name to reveal the plans He's about to accomplish. For example, God changed Abram to Abraham and Sarai to Sarah.

- Genesis 17:5 "No longer shall your name be called Abram, but your name shall be Abraham; for I have made you a father of many nations."
- Genesis 17:15-16 Then God said to Abraham, "As for Sarai your wife, you shall not call her name Sarai, but Sarah shall be her name. "And I will bless her and also give you a son by her; then I will bless her, and she shall be a mother of nations; kings of peoples shall be from her."

God's plan involved a miracle promise of a son. Both Abram and Sarai's initial reaction was to *"laugh."* (Gen. 17:17; 18:12). The Hebrew word and tense reveal this was an incredulous or skeptical laugh. At first, they were disinclined to believe what they were hearing. You can almost imagine them saying, *"Are you kidding me!"* Although it was a natural response to a supernatural promise, God quickly helped them take a leap of faith with this simple question, *"Is anything too hard for the Lord?"* (Gen. 18:14). In fact, God Himself names the miracle child, Isaac (*yishaq*), meaning *"he laughs."* Suddenly, God turns laughter into a symbol of blessing for His chosen people and an entire nation.

The importance of names continues when God changes the name of Jacob to Israel.

- Genesis 32:1-2 So Jacob went on his way, and the angels of God met him. When Jacob saw them, he said, "This is God's camp." And he called the name of that place Mahanaim.
- Genesis 32:28 And He said, "Your name shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel; for you have struggled with God and with men, and have prevailed."

The overarching context of this name change is one of strategic prayer and intercession. Jacob is *"greatly afraid and distressed"* (Gen. 32:7) when he heard that Esau was coming with 400 men (Gen. 32:6). Again, this name-change signals God's blessing of taking a *"heel holder"* or *"supplanter"* and turning him into a fulfiller of divine purpose for the twelve patriarchs and descendants of the nation of Israel. Despite all of Jacob's past shortcomings, he is now *"Israel,"* which literally means, *"God prevails!"* How did Jacob arrive at this place of prevailing or overcoming faith? First, he camped at *"God's camp."* Strategic intercession takes place in God's presence. It was there that Jacob interceded as follows:

- Genesis 32:9-12 Then Jacob said, "O God of my father Abraham and God of my father Isaac, the LORD who said to me, 'Return to your country and to your family, and I will deal well with you': 'I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies and of all the truth which You have shown Your servant; for I crossed over this Jordan with my staff, and now I have become two companies. "Deliver me, I pray, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau; for

**I fear him, lest he come and attack me and the mother with the children. "For You said, 'I will surely treat you well, and make your descendants as the sand of the sea, which cannot be numbered for multitude.'"**

Although this prayer is a basic plea for deliverance, there is an alignment with the truth of what God has spoken to him. Jacob has a growing awareness of God's purpose. He prays the divine promise back to God with a genuine spirit of humility. However, I see a higher level of engagement that follows at the river Jabbok.

- **Genesis 32:22-32 And he arose that night and took his two wives, his two female servants, and his eleven sons, and crossed over the ford of Jabbok. He took them, sent them over the brook, and sent over what he had. Then Jacob was left alone; and a Man wrestled with him until the breaking of day. Now when He saw that He did not prevail against him, He touched the socket of his hip; and the socket of Jacob's hip was out of joint as He wrestled with him. And He said, "Let Me go, for the day breaks." But he said, "I will not let You go unless You bless me!" So He said to him, "What is your name?" He said, "Jacob." And He said, "Your name shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel; for you have struggled with God and with men, and have prevailed." Then Jacob asked, saying, "Tell me Your name, I pray." And He said, "Why is it that you ask about My name?" And He blessed him there. And Jacob called the name of the place Peniel: "For I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved." Just as he crossed over Peniel the sun rose on him, and he limped on his hip. Therefore to this day the children of Israel do not eat the muscle that shrank, which is on the hip socket, because He touched the socket of Jacob's hip in the muscle that shrank.**

There is a relentless persistence as Jacob wrestles with God. Strategic intercessors get in the ring with God and struggle in prayer until there's a breaking. While desperate times are a prelude to divine visitations, they are also a call for a willingness to contend with God. Jacob is a tenacious fighter! He has an overcoming attitude. The prophet Hosea interprets this encounter as a model for facing difficulties:

- **Hosea 12:3-5 He took his brother by the heel in the womb, And in his strength he struggled with God. Yes, he struggled with the Angel and prevailed; He wept, and sought favor from Him. He found Him in Bethel, And there He spoke to us-- That is, the LORD God of hosts. The LORD is His memorable name.**

Of course, Jacob is focused upon his situation with Esau, but there comes a point of transformation. Some scholars see his character transformation as secondary in his struggle with God; however, it appears that the bigger issue is with God's promise for His chosen people and the nation of Israel. Yes, God commends Jacob's willingness to contend for the promise of God and to fight for its direct fulfillment regarding Esau. But once he recognizes he's face to face with God, there's a significant benefit from his persistence and fighting spirit. He won't let go until God blesses him and tells him His Name. Hosea reveals His name as **"the LORD God of hosts."** The Hebrew meaning of hosts (*tsaba*) is an *army, war, warfare*. The term appears in the plural with the definite article attached so its speaking about specific armies of the Lord. These are the armies of God that go forth into battle. I will say much more about this in another teaching, but it's important to understand that this is a prominent name of God in the Bible, appearing at least 293 times.

There are unique, but equally valid ways to look at Jacob's encounter at the River Jabbok. For example, the 19<sup>th</sup> century American revivalist, Dwight Moody, focused on the hip displacement and how God lifts up the lowly.

"There was a man who wrestled with Jacob. He was Christ. When did Jacob prevail? When his thigh was out of joint, and all he could do was hold on and get the blessing. The man who is the lowest down is the man whom God lifts up the highest. The name that has the greatest humility will be the most exalted."<sup>1</sup>

Others place great emphasis upon the wrestling with God as a necessary step for revival.

"The river Jabbok, meaning "pouring out," represents the work of God's Spirit in life during times of deep wrestling and change. Alone, Jacob nervously spent the remaining night hours at this river before he met Esau and returned to his homeland. During the night, Jacob wrestled the greatest match of his life – struggling with himself and fighting with God. An experienced wrestler, Jacob was unable to defeat this unnamed opponent. As daylight broke upon the duo, the heavenly competitor disjointed Jacob's hip joint, leaving him permanently crippled. Realizing his challenger's identity, Jacob begged to know his name, as names were important to the people. Those who desire to see revival must approach the river Jabbok and wrestle until they realize that God works best through newly named, limping leaders."<sup>2</sup>

The meaning of the River Jabbok *to pour out, empty, or spread out like a fruitful vine* is quite significant in the context of strategic prayer. Our intercession needs to be void of all else but the work of the Holy Spirit. This can only come with a deep wrestling in prayer that leads to hearing the voice of God and what the Spirit is saying to the church. It is a level of prayer, intercession, and warfare that changes things around us and brings our praying into alignment with heavenly counsel and priorities. This is the strategic level of prayer that is most needed today. I believe the new generation leaders and believers struggle to completely empty themselves in order to embrace the full operation of the Holy Spirit. They must get to the River Jabbok! We must help them to do so. These are very helpful approaches to Jacob's encounter at the River Jabbok; however, I would like to focus our attention upon the role of strategic prayer in Jacob's overall experience. To do this, we need to look at the results of Jacob's wrestling with God.

The reference notes in these study Bibles capture the role of prayer and intercession in Jacob's impending transformation as a result of his wrestling with God.

"As Jacob desperately wrestled with God for the promised blessing, God allowed him to prevail (v. 28). But in the process God injured Jacob's hip (v. 25) as a reminder that Jacob must no longer walk in his own strength but must rely entirely on God to direct his steps (vv. 30-32). The name Jacob, which implied a "deceiver," was now changed to "Israel," which means "he struggles with God." Christ's followers are sometimes called the "Israel of God" (Gal. 6:16), which means the "God-strugglers." God does not want his people to be passive, but to actively pursue God's blessing and grace (Mt 5:6; 6:33; 7:7-8; 11:12; Lk 11:5-10). Jacob's overnight struggle with God resulted in God's blessing upon his life. (1) After that night, he knew that his life and success did not depend on his own methods and abilities but on God's help, guidance and blessing. Later, God reminded Israel's descendants of this truth: "Not by might nor by power,

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<sup>1</sup> The Revival Study Bible, 2010 p. 52.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

but by my Spirit, says the LORD Almighty” (Zec 4:6). (2) Victory and blessing in the lives of all of God’s people come the same way. While we may not wrestle physically with God, we can lay hold of him through intense and persistent prayer (Lk 11:5-10)... It also involves a deliberate effort to trust God, discover his purposes and do what he considers right.”<sup>3</sup>

The New Spirit Filled Life Bible also sees Jacob’s engaging with God in the context of strategic prayer.

“In boldness of faith, Jacob engages God fully (wrestles with Him, v. 28) that God would fulfill His promise and bless him and cause him to be a blessing to the families of the Earth (28:3, 4: 12:1-3). The idea of wrestling with God in prayer does not mean man twists God’s arm to get Him to act, but rather that human passion evidences the desire for what He has promised (Rom. 15:30; Col. 4:12). God gave Jacob the ultimate answer to his prayer: He showed His face (Gen. 32:30), an encounter with God that so changed Jacob’s life and perspective, he could now see the face of God as he beheld Esau (33:10). To see God’s face in a life-transforming encounter is the goal of every prayer. God wants to reveal the knowledge of His glory, by the power of His Spirit, in the face of Jesus Christ (2 Cor. 4:6). It is worthy to ask, seek, and knock (Luke 11:9, 10), as we persistently pursue the Father for deeper works of the Holy Spirit.”<sup>4</sup>

Although this is one of the best summaries I read on Jacob’s wrestling with God, there’s even more we can learn by a comparative review of Jacob’s prayers before and during this encounter.

The following chart is designed to help identify some points where Jacob’s praying shifts to a higher level of intercession and Kingdom advancement. I want to analyze these prayer segments to see where any movement occurs.

Genesis 32:9-12	Genesis 32:24-30
Reminds God of His promise to protect (32:9)	Fights, contends, strives, wrestles with God (32:24)
Thanks God for His blessings (32:10)	Allowed to prevail until God touches his hip (32:25, 31-32)
Begs God to rescue him (32:11)	Will not let go his hold on God until He blesses him (32:26)
Says main reason is to prosper in fulfillment of God’s purpose (32:12)	Acknowledges his name Jacob as deceiver (32:27)
Says he has become two companies (32:10)	Receives new name of divine destiny (32:28)
Says he is unworthy of God’s mercies (32:10)	Asks for God’s name and God blesses him (32:29)
Names place Mahanaim meaning God’s camp (32:1)	Names place <i>Peniel</i> (face of God) with declaration (32:30)
Troop of angels (32:1-2)	Face to face with God (32:28, 30)

I see several changes in these two prayer encounters. Keep in mind that there’s nothing wrong with either, but the second prayer encounter appears to be at a different level of intercession. In the first encounter, Jacob is not just fearful and distressed over his thinking that his brother, Esau, was coming to do him harm, he is **“greatly afraid and distressed.”** (Gen. 32:7, 11). Although he prays with humility and makes a good confession regarding what God says, he is consumed with an abundant fear. Fear is the enemy of faith. It’s a distressful situation that has somewhat cramped his prayer. Intercession bound with fear does not move the hand of God to act! This could be why

<sup>3</sup> Fire Bible: Global Study Edition, 2009 (pp. 91-92)

<sup>4</sup> New Spirit Filled Life Bible, 2002 (pp. 49-50)

there's no response from God. But Jacob is in God's camp with a troop of angels sent by God beforehand to reassure him. I see a breakthrough in the second encounter just in the boldness of faith. Now Jacob is boldly praying through till the breaking of the day. The persistence and tenacity of the warrior spirit is present. I also noted that there's a difference in the camp of God and the face of God. His presence is powerful in both places, but God's throne is above His camp for He is high and lifted up. So, to be in His camp is a great blessing, however, to be before His throne is a much higher level of engagement. I see Jacob move from God's camp to God's throne (Rev. 4:2); from binding fear to prevailing faith; from a checkered past to a divine destiny; from a subtle plea for help to a warring determination for what God has said to him. The blood of Christ has purchased our access to the holiest place where God sits. It's a new living way to the throne of God (Heb. 10:19-20). In conclusion, I would classify the first prayer encounter as a basic plea for help and the second as a transformational encounter.

I hope you can see the connection between the importance of names and the strategic role of intercession in these biblical examples. I will mention one more from the Old Testament before turning to the New. The prophet Samuel was the product of intercession. Hannah is full of grief and bitterness over her barrenness. Others ridiculed her. The intercessory pattern begins with her weeping and crying out to the Lord.

- **1 Samuel 1:10-18** And she was in bitterness of soul, and prayed to the LORD and wept in anguish. Then she made a vow and said, "O LORD of hosts, if You will indeed look on the affliction of Your maidservant and remember me, and not forget Your maidservant, but will give Your maidservant a male child, then I will give him to the LORD all the days of his life, and no razor shall come upon his head." And it happened, as she continued praying before the LORD, that Eli watched her mouth. Now Hannah spoke in her heart; only her lips moved, but her voice was not heard. Therefore Eli thought she was drunk. So Eli said to her, "How long will you be drunk? Put your wine away from you!" And Hannah answered and said, "No, my lord, I am a woman of sorrowful spirit. I have drunk neither wine nor intoxicating drink, but have poured out my soul before the LORD. "Do not consider your maidservant a wicked woman, for out of the abundance of my complaint and grief I have spoken until now." Then Eli answered and said, "Go in peace, and the God of Israel grant your petition which you have asked of Him." And she said, "Let your maidservant find favor in your sight." So the woman went her way and ate, and her face was no longer sad.

At this stage, Hannah is literally pouring out to the Lord every emotion in her soul, including anger over her situation. She asks God for a male child and vows to dedicate him solely to the Lord. Note how she addresses God, "**O LORD of hosts.**" In her affliction, she's calling on the entire heavenly army for help. Eli, the priest, doesn't appear to be of much help with his accusation against her, but he does extend his blessing of peace with his hope that God will grant her request. I can't help but observe that Hannah has more faith than the priest. There is no mention of Eli until the child is weaned and dedicated to the Lord forever. But Hannah and her husband, Elkanah, worshipped the Lord early the next morning (1Sam. 1:19). I find that worship is a very significant part of strategic prayer. Hannah's prayer is "*remembered*" by the Lord, and she conceives and names the child, Samuel, "**because I have asked him from the Lord.**" (1:20). Elkanah and Hannah agree to wait until the child is weaned before taking

him to Shiloh, so she stayed behind when the household went for the yearly worship and sacrifice.

- 1 Samuel 1:23-28 And Elkanah her husband said to her, "Do what seems best to you; wait until you have weaned him. Only let the LORD establish His word." So the woman stayed and nursed her son until she had weaned him. Now when she had weaned him, she took him up with her, with three bulls, one ephah of flour, and a skin of wine, and brought him to the house of the LORD in Shiloh. And the child was young. Then they slaughtered a bull, and brought the child to Eli. And she said, "O my lord! As your soul lives, my lord, I am the woman who stood by you here, praying to the LORD. "For this child I prayed, and the LORD has granted me my petition which I asked of Him. "Therefore I also have lent him to the LORD; as long as he lives he shall be lent to the LORD." So they worshiped the LORD there.

Strategic prayer is focused upon the Lord establishing His word. The granting of petitions extends beyond personal blessing to a much larger purpose or mission of God. In this case, it was God's plan to speak prophetically to a generation of His people and guide a nation in revival and the establishment His word. This means the word of God rises or builds up by the Spirit to the place of dynamic authority and power. This is exactly what happened in the Early Church.

- Acts 6:7 Then the word of God spread, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were obedient to the faith.
- Acts 12:24 But the word of God grew and multiplied.
- Acts 19:20 So the word of the Lord grew mightily and prevailed.

No wonder the apostles made the strategic decision not to leave the word of God to attend to other business. Instead, they said, ***"But we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word."*** (Acts 6:4). They were just as persistent in this commitment as Hannah was in her intercession before God.

Hannah dedicated the child of her blessing to the Lord. But look at the shifting or transformation in her prayer of dedication:

- 1 Samuel 2:1-11 And Hannah prayed and said: "My heart rejoices in the LORD; My horn is exalted in the LORD. I smile at my enemies, Because I rejoice in Your salvation. <sup>2</sup> "No one is holy like the LORD, For there is none besides You, Nor is there any rock like our God. <sup>3</sup> "Talk no more so very proudly; Let no arrogance come from your mouth, For the LORD is the God of knowledge; And by Him actions are weighed. <sup>4</sup> "The bows of the mighty men are broken, And those who stumbled are girded with strength. <sup>5</sup> Those who were full have hired themselves out for bread, And the hungry have ceased to hunger. Even the barren has borne seven, And she who has many children has become feeble. <sup>6</sup> "The LORD kills and makes alive; He brings down to the grave and brings up. <sup>7</sup> The LORD makes poor and makes rich; He brings low and lifts up. <sup>8</sup> He raises the poor from the dust And lifts the beggar from the ash heap, To set them among princes And make them inherit the throne of glory. "For the pillars of the earth are the LORD'S, And He has set the world upon them. <sup>9</sup> He will guard the feet of His saints, But the wicked shall be silent in darkness. "For by strength no man shall prevail. <sup>10</sup> The adversaries of the LORD shall be broken in pieces; From heaven He will thunder against them. The LORD will judge the ends of the earth. "He will

**give strength to His king, And exalt the horn of His anointed." <sup>11</sup> Then Elkanah went to his house at Ramah. But the child ministered to the LORD before Eli the priest.**

This is much more than a prayer of dedication. The Hebrew *palal* (paw-lal') specifically refers to intercession. It means to *intervene, interpose, arbitrate, and intercede in prayer*. This is the prayer of a warrior in perfect alignment with the plan and purpose of God. Intercession is a consultation with God! It must be to be effective. I'm moved how the intercessory process begins with the bitter tears of a barren woman who received the blessing of a child only to give him up to a higher purpose and divine destiny for a nation struggling with a corrupt and immoral priesthood. Samuel would be a heavenly voice out of the dark at a time where the word of God was rare.

- **1 Samuel 3:1 Then the boy Samuel ministered to the LORD before Eli. And the word of the LORD was rare in those days; there was no widespread revelation.**

There are only two times where the Bible says the lamp of God was going out and this is one of them (1 Sam. 3:3-4). I discovered it was a situation where God's word was not prized or valued by Israel. As a result, there was no breaking or bursting forth in victory. But this was precisely when the Lord called young Samuel.

- **1 Samuel 3:19-21 So Samuel grew, and the LORD was with him and let none of his words fall to the ground. And all Israel from Dan to Beersheba knew that Samuel had been established as a prophet of the LORD. Then the LORD appeared again in Shiloh. For the LORD revealed Himself to Samuel in Shiloh by the word of the LORD.**

Samuel would be a faithful priest, prophet, and judge over Israel. His influence over a nation and the future Davidic generation cannot be underestimated. There's a strong message to future generations and to spiritual leaders. One thing is that God raises up young prophetic leaders in nations during periods of great falling away. God calls them when the lamp is about to go out in the church and in society. These leaders stand alone amid clouds of darkness. However, they provide the turning point for the church and for a nation. I like what revival writer, David Shaw, says about this:

"In today's backsliding and unfaithfulness, we need more than men who will clean up football stadiums; we need men who will clean up the Church. We must have a holy race of prophets. We need a God possessed generation of living trumpets to awaken the sleeping Church from her stupor of self-indulgence and pride. We need an army of Spirit-filled revival men. Throughout the centuries, wherever the cause of Christ has been advanced, such Christ-consumed prophets are found pleading, praying, weeping, and preaching."<sup>5</sup>

The New Testament also has some important naming. Although I will look at the prominence of the name of Jesus later, I want to consider three names here: John the Baptist, Peter, and Paul. Luke's Gospel gives us a very detailed look at the birth and ministry of John the Baptist. Zacharias and his wife, Elizabeth, were both in right standing with God. They were old and had no child. Then this happens:

- **Luke 1:8-17 So it was, that while he was serving as priest before God in the order of his division, <sup>9</sup> according to the custom of the priesthood, his lot fell to burn incense when he went into the temple of the Lord. <sup>10</sup> And the whole multitude of the people was praying**

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<sup>5</sup>The Revival Study Bible, 2010 p. 360.

outside at the hour of incense. <sup>11</sup> Then an angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing on the right side of the altar of incense. <sup>12</sup> And when Zacharias saw him, he was troubled, and fear fell upon him. <sup>13</sup> But the angel said to him, "Do not be afraid, Zacharias, for your prayer is heard; and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall call his name John. <sup>14</sup> "And you will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth. <sup>15</sup> "For he will be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink. He will also be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb. <sup>16</sup> "And he will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God. <sup>17</sup> "He will also go before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah, 'to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children,' and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord."

Although Zacharias went into the temple to fulfill his assigned religious duties, there was a lot more going on. He was praying and worshiping. This is a wonderful place to begin. An army of intercessors were also praying outside. We know Zacharias brought his need to God through the door of prayer because the angel, Gabriel, confirmed it with the promise of a son who was to be named, John. I find it revealing that Zacharias was troubled or agitated as well as pressured and overwhelmed by fear. Often religious duties produce a resistance to anything moving in a different direction or, in short, to any change. Therefore, many spiritual leaders resist sudden moves of the Holy Spirit and divine visitations. It's also important to understand that Zacharias' fear did not come from God. It fell upon him! And it came upon him even before the angelic promise and divine purpose and destiny of the child were revealed. Zacharias, then, made the mistake of speaking words of disbelief out of his fear and troubled spirit. He did not have a correct view of the bigger picture.

- **Luke 1:18-20** And Zacharias said to the angel, "How shall I know this? For I am an old man, and my wife is well advanced in years." <sup>19</sup> And the angel answered and said to him, "I am Gabriel, who stands in the presence of God, and was sent to speak to you and bring you these glad tidings. <sup>20</sup> "But behold, you will be mute and not able to speak until the day these things take place, because you did not believe my words which will be fulfilled in their own time."

Zacharias remained speechless until the birth of John. It was heaven that silenced him! The miracle child was born with a divine destiny. Eight days later at the child's circumcision, the people expected the child to be named after his father, but Hannah answered with a resounding "No!"

- **Luke 1:59-66** So it was, on the eighth day, that they came to circumcise the child; and they would have called him by the name of his father, Zacharias. <sup>60</sup> His mother answered and said, "No; he shall be called John." <sup>61</sup> But they said to her, "There is no one among your relatives who is called by this name." <sup>62</sup> So they made signs to his father-- what he would have him called. <sup>63</sup> And he asked for a writing tablet, and wrote, saying, "His name is John." So they all marveled. <sup>64</sup> Immediately his mouth was opened and his tongue loosed, and he spoke, praising God. <sup>65</sup> Then fear came on all who dwelt around them; and all these sayings were discussed throughout all the hill country of Judea. <sup>66</sup> And all those who heard them kept them in their hearts, saying, "What kind of child will this be?" And the hand of the Lord was with him.

I see faith on the increase in both Zacharias and the people. Generations, peoples, and nations are about to be impacted! What comes out of the mouth of Zacharias is evidence of a complete transformation and alignment with the mission of God. He first praised God and then prophesied in the power of the Holy Spirit.

- **Luke 1:67-79** Now his father Zacharias was filled with the Holy Spirit, and prophesied, saying: <sup>68</sup> "Blessed is the Lord God of Israel, For He has visited and redeemed His people, <sup>69</sup> And has raised up a horn of salvation for us In the house of His servant David, <sup>70</sup> As He spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets, Who have been since the world began, <sup>71</sup> That we should be saved from our enemies And from the hand of all who hate us, <sup>72</sup> To perform the mercy promised to our fathers And to remember His holy covenant, <sup>73</sup> The oath which He swore to our father Abraham: <sup>74</sup> To grant us that we, Being delivered from the hand of our enemies, Might serve Him without fear, <sup>75</sup> In holiness and righteousness before Him all the days of our life. <sup>76</sup> "And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Highest; For you will go before the face of the Lord to prepare His ways, <sup>77</sup> To give knowledge of salvation to His people By the remission of their sins, <sup>78</sup> Through the tender mercy of our God, With which the Dayspring from on high has visited us; <sup>79</sup> To give light to those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death, To guide our feet into the way of peace."

This priest and intercessor is now speaking words of faith and life and victory. He sees what lies ahead and his son's mission to prepare the way for the Christ. His eyes were on the Lord and His mission. Zacharias has moved from a lack of faith and readiness to a state of awakened readiness. Is this generation of young leaders and intercessors ready? I like what Charles Spurgeon once spoke, *"If a mighty wave of revival sweeps over your nation, are your hearts ready? Are your hands ready? Are your purses ready? Are you altogether ready to be carried along on the crest of that blessed wave?"*<sup>6</sup>

Another New Testament leader named by the Lord is Simon Peter. He was not always called Simon because Jesus called him "*Cephas*" Or "*Peter*." He was known as "*Simon*" before Jesus called him. This is how it took place.

- **Mark 3:13-16** And He went up on the mountain and called to Him those He Himself wanted. And they came to Him. <sup>14</sup> Then He appointed twelve, that they might be with Him and that He might send them out to preach, <sup>15</sup> and to have power to heal sicknesses and to cast out demons: <sup>16</sup> Simon, to whom He gave the name Peter;
- **Luke 6:12-16** Now it came to pass in those days that He went out to the mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God. <sup>13</sup> And when it was day, He called His disciples to Himself; and from them He chose twelve whom He also named apostles: <sup>14</sup> Simon, whom He also named Peter, and Andrew his brother; James and John; Philip and Bartholomew; <sup>15</sup> Matthew and Thomas; James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon called the Zealot; <sup>16</sup> Judas the son of James, and Judas Iscariot who also became a traitor.
- **John 1:40-42** One of the two who heard John speak, and followed Him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. <sup>41</sup> He first found his own brother Simon, and said to him, "We have found the Messiah " (which is translated, the Christ). <sup>42</sup> And he brought him to Jesus. Now when Jesus looked at him, He said, "You are Simon the son of Jonah. You shall be called Cephas " (which is translated, A Stone).

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<sup>6</sup> The Revival Study Bible, 2010 p. 1395.

Note how Jesus spent all night in prayer before appointing twelve apostles out of a multitude of disciples. I don't believe there's enough strategic prayer and intercession over young leaders today. It's also obvious that Jesus had foreknowledge of Peter's divine purpose and mission. Although it took over three years for Peter to understand and enter God's destiny for his life, the point is that Jesus revealed it from the beginning in naming him. The name is descriptive of the divine purpose. This is also evident in Peter's bold confession that Jesus is the Christ.

- **Matthew 16:15** He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" <sup>16</sup> Simon Peter answered and said, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." <sup>17</sup> Jesus answered and said to him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven. <sup>18</sup> "And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. <sup>19</sup> "And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven."

Luke points out that this naming occurred when the disciples joined Jesus, **"as He was alone praying"** (Luke 9:18-20). This level of praying produces new God-chosen leaders and bold declarations of faith.

Peter was certainly on a learning curve with several ups and downs. Although Jesus commends him for his bold proclamation of faith, he and the other apostles struggled with prayer on several occasions.

- **Matthew 17:19-21** Then the disciples came to Jesus privately and said, "Why could we not cast it out?" <sup>20</sup> So Jesus said to them, "Because of your unbelief; for assuredly, I say to you, if you have faith as a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you. <sup>21</sup> "However, this kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting."
- **Luke 9:28-32** Now it came to pass, about eight days after these sayings, that He took Peter, John, and James and went up on the mountain to pray. <sup>29</sup> As He prayed, the appearance of His face was altered, and His robe became white and glistening. <sup>30</sup> And behold, two men talked with Him, who were Moses and Elijah, <sup>31</sup> who appeared in glory and spoke of His decease which He was about to accomplish at Jerusalem. <sup>32</sup> But Peter and those with him were heavy with sleep; and when they were fully awake, they saw His glory and the two men who stood with Him.
- **Luke 22:39-46** Coming out, He went to the Mount of Olives, as He was accustomed, and His disciples also followed Him. <sup>40</sup> When He came to the place, He said to them, "Pray that you may not enter into temptation." <sup>41</sup> And He was withdrawn from them about a stone's throw, and He knelt down and prayed, <sup>42</sup> saying, "Father, if it is Your will, take this cup away from Me; nevertheless not My will, but Yours, be done." <sup>43</sup> Then an angel appeared to Him from heaven, strengthening Him. <sup>44</sup> And being in agony, He prayed more earnestly. Then His sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground. <sup>45</sup> When He rose up from prayer, and had come to His disciples, He found them sleeping from sorrow. <sup>46</sup> Then He said to them, "Why do you sleep? Rise and pray, lest you enter into temptation."

Jesus is clearly focused on heaven's mission in the above accounts. He came to destroy the works of the devil and to purchase our salvation by shedding His blood on

the cross. This is confirmed at the Transfiguration when Elijah and Moses are talking with Him about His departure (literally, exodus) from earth that He was about to fulfil or accomplish. I discovered an interesting contrast in these accounts regarding strategic prayer. The following chart poses a startling question. What is the church of this generation doing while Jesus ***“lives to make intercession”*** for us (Heb. 7:25)?

Jesus	Peter & Disciples	Mission/Message
Praying on the mountain; transformed; glorified; receives heavenly counsel	Heavy with sleep; awoken & fearfully enter glory cloud & hear God's voice	His departure; pray & be fully awake; listen to Jesus, My Son
Full of faith coming down the mountain	Disbelief; inability to cast out demons	Cast out demons; have & speak faith; much prayer & fasting required
Intensely praying in the Garden; surrenders His will; grew strong; ready to accomplish mission	Exhausted; sleeping; sorrowful	The cross; pray to overcome temptation; pray intensely to victory; get up and pray

I believe this reveals that Jesus is fully engaged in prayer with a mission focus while Peter and the disciples are focused on their own needs. I can't help thinking that the church has the same thing happening today. Nevertheless, Jesus does not give up on Peter. After all, He had interceded for Peter earlier that his faith would not fail.

- Luke 22:31-34 And the Lord said, "Simon, Simon! Indeed, Satan has asked for you, that he may sift you as wheat. <sup>32</sup> "But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to Me, strengthen your brethren." <sup>33</sup> But he said to Him, "Lord, I am ready to go with You, both to prison and to death." <sup>34</sup> Then He said, "I tell you, Peter, the rooster shall not crow this day before you will deny three times that you know Me."

Although Peter would later deny even knowing Jesus and ***“went out and wept bitterly”*** (Luke 22:62), the strategic intercession of Jesus would bring forth a most powerful transformation. The devil wants to pick Peter apart; to weaken his faith to the point of overthrow. The only thing standing between utter defeat and the fulfillment of divine purpose is the strategic prayers of Jesus. Peter must return to the Lord and so must the church! The Resurrected Jesus restores Peter after a miraculous breakfast at the seashore.

- John 21:15-22 So when they had eaten breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me more than these?" He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You." He said to him, "Feed My lambs." <sup>16</sup> He said to him again a second time, "Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me?" He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You." He said to him, "Tend My sheep." <sup>17</sup> He said to him the third time, "Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me?" Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, "Do you love Me?" And he said to Him, "Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You." Jesus said to him, "Feed My sheep. <sup>18</sup> "Most assuredly, I say to you, when you were younger, you girded yourself and walked where you wished; but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will gird you and carry you where you do not wish." <sup>19</sup> This He spoke, signifying by what death he would glorify God. And when He had spoken this, He said to him, "Follow Me." <sup>20</sup> Then Peter, turning around, saw the disciple whom Jesus loved following, who also had leaned on His breast at the supper, and said, "Lord, who is the one who betrays You?"

**<sup>21</sup> Peter, seeing him, said to Jesus, "But Lord, what about this man?" <sup>22</sup> Jesus said to him, "If I will that he remain till I come, what is that to you? You follow Me."**

The divine purpose and mission in the life of Peter is consistently affirmed in the context of strategic prayer. Immediately following forty days of appearances and instructions by the risen Christ, we see a new Spirit Filled Peter fulfilling his divine purpose. A seemingly defeated man now stands upright with a bold and stable faith in the power of God. In fact, Peter is filled with the power of the Spirit and is so focused upon Jesus that even his shadow heals the sick (Acts 5:14-16). And the role of strategic prayer cannot be denied throughout, nor in the Early Church. This generation needs a transfiguration and a transformation!

The Apostle Paul is also an example of a dynamic transition. In his case, he moves from a persecutor to an ambassador of Christ. He first appears in the Bible as Saul, a relentless persecutor of believers in Christ.

- **Acts 8:1-3 Now Saul was consenting to his death. At that time a great persecution arose against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles. <sup>2</sup> And devout men carried Stephen to his burial, and made great lamentation over him. <sup>3</sup> As for Saul, he made havoc of the church, entering every house, and dragging off men and women, committing them to prison.**
- **Acts 9:1-2 Then Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest <sup>2</sup> and asked letters from him to the synagogues of Damascus, so that if he found any who were of the Way, whether men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem.**

It was interesting to me that Saul was a young man when he approved with others the death of Stephen (Acts 7:58). He was later called Paul, a Greek name that identifies more closely with his calling and mission to the Gentiles (Acts 13:9). I did notice that the meaning of Saul (*asked, desired of God*) connects him with divine purpose and mission. God desired this leader of the resistance movement to be on His team. The church, this generation of leaders and prayer warriors, needs to grasp this point. The Lord has need of you! I believe it's a higher and more strategic level of prayer required to intercede for the rebellious and disobedient who are resisting and persecuting Christ followers. I want to first look at the record of Saul's conversion.

- **Acts 9:3-9 As he journeyed he came near Damascus, and suddenly a light shone around him from heaven. <sup>4</sup> Then he fell to the ground, and heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?" <sup>5</sup> And he said, "Who are You, Lord?" Then the Lord said, "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. It is hard for you to kick against the goads." <sup>6</sup> So he, trembling and astonished, said, "Lord, what do You want me to do?" Then the Lord said to him, "Arise and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do." <sup>7</sup> And the men who journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing a voice but seeing no one. <sup>8</sup> Then Saul arose from the ground, and when his eyes were opened he saw no one. But they led him by the hand and brought him into Damascus. <sup>9</sup> And he was three days without sight, and neither ate nor drank.**

Persecution of the church is nothing new, but it is rapidly on the rise around the world. The response of the Early Church was to boldly pray and continue with Christ's mission in the power of the Holy Spirit.

- **Acts 4:23-31** And being let go, they went to their own companions and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said to them. <sup>24</sup> So when they heard that, they raised their voice to God with one accord and said: "Lord, You are God, who made heaven and earth and the sea, and all that is in them, <sup>25</sup> "who by the mouth of Your servant David have said: 'Why did the nations rage, And the people plot vain things? <sup>26</sup> The kings of the earth took their stand, And the rulers were gathered together Against the LORD and against His Christ.' <sup>27</sup> "For truly against Your holy Servant Jesus, whom You anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, were gathered together <sup>28</sup> "to do whatever Your hand and Your purpose determined before to be done. <sup>29</sup> "Now, Lord, look on their threats, and grant to Your servants that with all boldness they may speak Your word, <sup>30</sup> "by stretching out Your hand to heal, and that signs and wonders may be done through the name of Your holy Servant Jesus." <sup>31</sup> And when they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness.

Could it be that this strategic level of prayer and warfare led to Saul's dramatic conversion? Will God shake things up today in response to the prayers of skilled intercessors? I believe He will! What happens next in Saul's transformation once again confirms the role of strategic prayer.

- **Acts 9:10-22** Now there was a certain disciple at Damascus named Ananias; and to him the Lord said in a vision, "Ananias." And he said, "Here I am, Lord." <sup>11</sup> So the Lord said to him, "Arise and go to the street called Straight, and inquire at the house of Judas for one called Saul of Tarsus, for behold, he is praying. <sup>12</sup> "And in a vision he has seen a man named Ananias coming in and putting his hand on him, so that he might receive his sight." <sup>13</sup> Then Ananias answered, "Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much harm he has done to Your saints in Jerusalem. <sup>14</sup> "And here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who call on Your name." <sup>15</sup> But the Lord said to him, "Go, for he is a chosen vessel of Mine to bear My name before Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel. <sup>16</sup> "For I will show him how many things he must suffer for My name's sake." <sup>17</sup> And Ananias went his way and entered the house; and laying his hands on him he said, "Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you came, has sent me that you may receive your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit." <sup>18</sup> Immediately there fell from his eyes something like scales, and he received his sight at once; and he arose and was baptized. <sup>19</sup> So when he had received food, he was strengthened. Then Saul spent some days with the disciples at Damascus. <sup>20</sup> Immediately he preached the Christ in the synagogues, that He is the Son of God. <sup>21</sup> Then all who heard were amazed, and said, "Is this not he who destroyed those who called on this name in Jerusalem, and has come here for that purpose, so that he might bring them bound to the chief priests?" <sup>22</sup> But Saul increased all the more in strength, and confounded the Jews who dwelt in Damascus, proving that this Jesus is the Christ.

Note again the emphasis upon divine purpose and mission in the context of strategic prayer. Now we find this resistance leader no longer resisting. What's he doing? "*He is praying!*" From this point on, Paul will be fully devoted and engaged in Christ's mission

for his life. It's ironic that Paul writes much of the New Testament from prison. He who imprisoned others is now praying and praising God with Silas in prison.

- **Acts 16:25 But at midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them.**

The following chart chronicles this amazing transformation.

BEFORE CONVERSION	AFTER CONVERSION
PERSECUTING	Praying to Jesus
THREATENING	Preaching Christ
ARRESTING/BINDING	Saving/Setting captives free
KILLING	Healing the sick
ALIGNING WITH RELIGION	Joining the disciples of Christ
PHARISEE OF PHARISEES	Spirit Filled Apostle to the Gentiles

Paul's dramatic change and pursuit of the divine purpose and mission for his life are nothing short of remarkable. I think the best way to summarize it is in Paul's own words:

- **Galatians 1:22-24 And I was unknown by face to the churches of Judea which were in Christ. <sup>23</sup> But they were hearing only, "He who formerly persecuted us now preaches the faith which he once tried to destroy." <sup>24</sup> And they glorified God in me.**

## I AM

God clearly identifies Himself in the Bible with His name. The following examples reveal His name is often linked with His attributes and benefits.

- |                      |                               |
|----------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. JEHOVAH-TSIDKENU  | God our righteousness         |
| 2. JEHOVAH-M'KADDESH | God who sanctifies            |
| 3. JEHOVAH-SHALOM    | God is peace                  |
| 4. JEHOVAH-SHAMMAH   | God is there                  |
| 5. JEHOBAH-ROPHE     | God heals                     |
| 6. JEHOVAH-JIREH     | God's provision shall be seen |
| 7. JEHOVAH-NISSI     | God is my banner              |
| 8. JEHOVAH-ROHI      | God is my shepherd            |

These eight biblical names are like picture identification cards to help us understand who God is and what He does. Although these names are to be hallowed and cherished in faith, I see some names in God's word that overwhelm and consume me. The first is the great **"I AM."** It was God's answer to Moses' question, **"What is His name?"**

- **Exodus 3:14-15 And God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM." And He said, "Thus you shall say to the children of Israel, 'I AM has sent me to you.'" <sup>15</sup> Moreover God said to Moses, "Thus you shall say to the children of Israel: 'The LORD God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you. This is My name forever, and this is My memorial to all generations.'**

Note how this revealed name is a forever name and a remembrance to every generation. This is the same name that caused the troops and religious leaders who arrested Jesus to fall to the ground.

- John 18:6 Now when He said to them, "I am He," they drew back and fell to the ground.

They literally moved back rapidly and descended from a higher place to a prostrate position. These are His enemies! This is a dramatic reminder that in the darkest hours Jesus has the power over His enemies and the powers of darkness in every city, region, and nation. He is the one who holds the divine name, **"I AM."**

- John 8:24 "Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for if you do not believe that I am He, you will die in your sins."
- John 8:28 Then Jesus said to them, "When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am He, and that I do nothing of Myself; but as My Father taught Me, I speak these things."
- John 8:58 Jesus said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM."

It's also important to understand that this divine name, first revealed to Moses, is in verb form and is forever connected to God's existence and eternal life. God's not dead! He's alive! This one name encompasses all the revealed names of God.

- I AM the bread of life (John 6:35, 51)
- I AM the light of the world (John 8:12)
- I AM the door (John 10:7-9)
- I AM the good shepherd (John 10: 11, 14)
- I AM the resurrection and the life (John 11:25)
- I AM the way, the truth, and the life (John 14:6)
- I AM the true vine (John 15:1, 5)

I believe two verses of Scripture capture the awesomeness and limitless nature and quality of this divine name of **"I AM."**

- Hebrews 13:8 Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever.
- Revelation 1:8 "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End," says the Lord, "who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty."

There are some names revealed in Revelation that we usually don't associate with names; however, the Bible presents them as divine names. Both occur following the fall of Babylon, the great harlot and **"dwelling place of demons, a prison for every foul spirit..."** (Rev. 18:2). Now, heavenly voices are praising God for the victory with one loud **"Alleluia"** after another. What John sees next is powerful.

- Revelation 19:11-16 Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war. <sup>12</sup> His eyes were like a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns. He had a name written that no one knew except Himself. <sup>13</sup> He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God. <sup>14</sup> And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses. <sup>15</sup> Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. <sup>16</sup> And He has on His robe and on His thigh a name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.

Note the name tags applied to Christ: **Faithful and True**, **The Word of God**, and **KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS**. Also, the context is one of spiritual warfare and

God dealing with nations. I don't believe what John saw is only for the end of the world. We are living in the end times now and the word of God remains a sharp two-edged sword of the Spirit (Eph. 6:17; Heb. 4:12) that needs to be unleashed upon the nations without delay. Many things have restrained and slowed this generation in the advance of Christ's mission, but the Lord is ready to ride! Stop acting like the war is lost and over! Follow the One with the crowns on His head! The crowns on His head are those representing the highest ruling authority in each area and are associated with kingship. Thus, the title name **"KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS."**

## **For the Sake of His Name**

Why does God do what He does? Why does He intervene even when His people fall away and are defeated, surrounded by clouds of darkness? Yes, God loves His creation, but the Scriptures make it clear He's often displeased with what it has become. Of course, God is merciful and mercy triumphs over judgment. He delays His coming to judge the nations of the world because He's **"not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance."** (2Pet. 3:9). There's also another reason that can easily get overlooked if we're not careful. It's for His Names Sake! Look what David repeats in the Psalms:

- Psalm 23:3 He restores my soul; He leads me in the paths of righteousness For His name's sake.
- Psalm 25:11 For Your name's sake, O LORD, Pardon my iniquity, for it is great.
- Psalm 31:3 For You are my rock and my fortress; Therefore, for Your name's sake, Lead me and guide me.
- Psalm 79:9 Help us, O God of our salvation, For the glory of Your name; And deliver us, and provide atonement for our sins, For Your name's sake!
- Psalm 106:8 Nevertheless He saved them for His name's sake, That He might make His mighty power known.
- Psalm 109:21 But You, O GOD the Lord, Deal with me for Your name's sake; Because Your mercy is good, deliver me.
- Psalm 143:11 Revive me, O LORD, for Your name's sake! For Your righteousness' sake bring my soul out of trouble.

Wow! Even revival is for the sake of His Name! I discovered this was a consistent point in God's dealings with His people. The prophets also speak forth this truth.

- Isaiah 48:9 "For My name's sake I will defer My anger, And for My praise I will restrain it from you, So that I do not cut you off. <sup>10</sup> Behold, I have refined you, but not as silver; I have tested you in the furnace of affliction. <sup>11</sup> For My own sake, for My own sake, I will do it; For how should My name be profaned? And I will not give My glory to another.

What will God do? He will restrain His anger and redeem His people. He speaks this while Israel is still in Babylonian captivity under heavy affliction as a result of forsaking God. In the same breath, the prophet declares:

- Isaiah 48:16-17 "Come near to Me, hear this: I have not spoken in secret from the beginning; From the time that it was, I was there. And now the Lord GOD and His Spirit Have sent Me."

<sup>17</sup> Thus says the LORD, your Redeemer, The Holy One of Israel: "I am the LORD your God, Who teaches you to profit, Who leads you by the way you should go.

- Isaiah 48:20-22 Go forth from Babylon! Flee from the Chaldeans! With a voice of singing, Declare, proclaim this, Utter it to the end of the earth; Say, "The LORD has redeemed His servant Jacob!" <sup>21</sup> And they did not thirst When He led them through the deserts; He caused the waters to flow from the rock for them; He also split the rock, and the waters gushed out. <sup>22</sup> "There is no peace," says the LORD, "for the wicked."

This declaration is to be proclaimed to the end of the earth. And it is all for His name's sake. Jeremiah's prayer of intercession also confirms this:

- Jeremiah 14:7-11, 21 O LORD, though our iniquities testify against us, Do it for Your name's sake; For our backslidings are many, We have sinned against You. <sup>8</sup> O the Hope of Israel, his Savior in time of trouble, Why should You be like a stranger in the land, And like a traveler who turns aside to tarry for a night? <sup>9</sup> Why should You be like a man astonished, Like a mighty one who cannot save? Yet You, O LORD, are in our midst, And we are called by Your name; Do not leave us!...Do not abhor us, for Your name's sake; Do not disgrace the throne of Your glory. Remember, do not break Your covenant with us.

In every time of distress, God is the answer! And this prophetic intercession proves it. Jeremiah is praying for God to deal with them for His name's sake and not according to their many backslidings. The prophet Ezekiel also reminds God's people that when He acted in Egypt and the wilderness, He says, "***I acted for My name's sake.***" Three times He says this (Ezek. 20:9, 14, 22). . The reason was twofold:

1. That they may know that I am the LORD (Ezek. 20:12, 20, 26, 38, 42, 44).
2. That His name would not be profaned before the Gentiles (Ezek. 20:9, 14, 22, 39).

The word of the Lord repeatedly speaks this truth.

- Ezekiel 20:44 "Then you shall know that I am the LORD, when I have dealt with you for My name's sake, not according to your wicked ways nor according to your corrupt doings, O house of Israel," says the Lord GOD."
- Ezekiel 36:22 "Therefore say to the house of Israel, 'Thus says the Lord GOD: "I do not do this for your sake, O house of Israel, but for My holy name's sake, which you have profaned among the nations wherever you went."

The strategic intercessions of Daniel also reveal the same point:

- Daniel 9:17 "Now therefore, our God, hear the prayer of Your servant, and his supplications, and for the Lord's sake cause Your face to shine on Your sanctuary, which is desolate.
- Daniel 9:19 "O Lord, hear! O Lord, forgive! O Lord, listen and act! Do not delay for Your own sake, my God, for Your city and Your people are called by Your name."

I believe we need to pray more strategically in regard to God's name. We will look at this more closely in the New Testament, but first there is a name of God that I mentioned earlier that is somewhat overlooked. That name is "***The LORD of hosts.***"

***"The LORD of hosts"*** is a prominent name with around 293 appearances in the Bible. What I find very revealing about this name is that it's used in intercession as well

as prophetic proclamations. Although the Bible says Elkanah went from his city **“yearly to worship and sacrifice to the LORD of hosts in Shiloh”** (1Sam. 1:3), the first occurrence in intercession is from his wife, Hannah.

- 1 Samuel 1:11 And she made a vow and said, "O LORD of hosts, if Thou wilt indeed look on the affliction of Thy maidservant and remember me, and not forget Thy maidservant, but wilt give Thy maidservant a son, then I will give him to the LORD all the days of his life, and a razor shall never come on his head."

I've recognized and declared the Lord as **“The LORD of hosts,”** but I cannot remember praying in that name. However, Hannah did and so did David, Isaiah, and Jeremiah.

- 2 Samuel 7:27 "For You, O LORD of hosts, God of Israel, have revealed this to Your servant, saying, 'I will build you a house.' Therefore Your servant has found it in his heart to pray this prayer to You.
- Psalm 69:6 Let not those who wait for You, O Lord GOD of hosts, be ashamed because of me; Let not those who seek You be confounded because of me, O God of Israel.
- Psalm 80:4 O LORD God of hosts, How long will You be angry Against the prayer of Your people?
- Psalm 80:7 Restore us, O God of hosts; Cause Your face to shine, And we shall be saved!
- Psalm 80:19 Restore us, O LORD God of hosts; Cause Your face to shine, And we shall be saved!
- Psalm 84:8 O LORD God of hosts, hear my prayer; Give ear, O God of Jacob! Selah
- Psalm 89:8 O LORD God of hosts, Who is mighty like You, O LORD? Your faithfulness also surrounds You.
- Isaiah 37:16 "O LORD of hosts, God of Israel, the One who dwells between the cherubim, You are God, You alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth. You have made heaven and earth.
- Jeremiah 15:16 Your words were found, and I ate them, And Your word was to me the joy and rejoicing of my heart; For I am called by Your name, O LORD God of hosts.
- Jeremiah 20:12 But, O LORD of hosts, You who test the righteous, And see the mind and heart, Let me see Your vengeance on them; For I have pleaded my cause before You.
- Jeremiah 27:18 'But if they are prophets, and if the word of the LORD is with them, let them now make intercession to the LORD of hosts, that the vessels which are left in the house of the LORD, in the house of the king of Judah, and at Jerusalem, do not go to Babylon.'
- Zechariah 8:22 Yes, many peoples and strong nations Shall come to seek the LORD of hosts in Jerusalem, And to pray before the LORD.'

I've decided in alignment with God's word to include praying to **“The LORD of hosts”** in my times of intercession. Of course, I will do this in the name of Jesus and when prompted by the Spirit.

The prophetic foundation declares **“The LORD of hosts”** as God's name. I discovered the following direct references where the word of God says this is God's name:

- 2 Samuel 6:2 And David arose and went with all the people who were with him from Baale Judah to bring up from there the ark of God, whose name is called by the Name, the LORD of Hosts, who dwells between the cherubim.
- Isaiah 48:2 For they call themselves after the holy city, And lean on the God of Israel; The LORD of hosts is His name:
- Isaiah 51:15 But I am the LORD your God, Who divided the sea whose waves roared-- The LORD of hosts is His name.
- Isaiah 54:5 For your Maker is your husband, The LORD of hosts is His name; And your Redeemer is the Holy One of Israel; He is called the God of the whole earth.
- Jeremiah 10:16; 51:19 The Portion of Jacob is not like them, For He is the Maker of all things, And Israel is the tribe of His inheritance; The LORD of hosts is His name.
- Jeremiah 31:35 Thus says the LORD, Who gives the sun for a light by day, The ordinances of the moon and the stars for a light by night, Who disturbs the sea, And its waves roar (The LORD of hosts is His name):
- Jeremiah 32:18 `You show lovingkindness to thousands, and repay the iniquity of the fathers into the bosom of their children after them-- the Great, the Mighty God, whose name is the LORD of hosts.
- Hosea 12:5 That is, the LORD God of hosts. The LORD is His memorable name.
- Amos 4:13 For behold, He who forms mountains, And creates the wind, Who declares to man what his thought is, And makes the morning darkness, Who treads the high places of the earth-- The LORD God of hosts is His name.
- Amos 5:27 Therefore I will send you into captivity beyond Damascus," Says the LORD, whose name is the God of hosts.
- Malachi 1:11 For from the rising of the sun, even to its going down, My name shall be great among the Gentiles; In every place incense shall be offered to My name, And a pure offering; For My name shall be great among the nations," Says the LORD of hosts.

I must conclude that God prefers to be known as ***“The LORD of hosts!”*** And the appearance of this name is almost always connected with warfare. Just look at what young David said to Goliath:

- 1 Samuel 17:45 Then David said to the Philistine, "You come to me with a sword, with a spear, and with a javelin. But I come to you in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied.

We will learn more about the armies of God later, but the point is that David became a great warrior because ***“The LORD God of hosts”*** was with him. He is the reason for David’s success in battle.

- 2 Samuel 5:10 So David went on and became great, and the LORD God of hosts was with him.

He is also the reason for our success in battle today.

## **The Name of Jesus Christ**

Is there a connection between ***“The LORD of hosts”*** and the name that is above every name that is named in heaven and on earth? I discovered something most

remarkable in the book of Isaiah. Isaiah is often referred to as the Gospel of the Old Testament. It's quoted more often by Jesus than any other book of the Bible. There are a few verses that caught my attention.

- Isaiah 9:6-7 For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given; And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. <sup>7</sup> Of the increase of His government and peace There will be no end, Upon the throne of David and over His kingdom, To order it and establish it with judgment and justice From that time forward, even forever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.
- Isaiah 44:6 "Thus says the LORD, the King of Israel, And his Redeemer, the LORD of hosts: 'I am the First and I am the Last; Besides Me there is no God.
- Isaiah 47:4 As for our Redeemer, the LORD of hosts is His name, The Holy One of Israel...

Although every Christian is aware that Jesus Christ is our Redeemer, the prophet is also declaring that the Messiah, Jesus Christ, is ***"The LORD of hosts."*** Even Jeremiah acknowledges this when he says, ***"Their Redeemer is strong; The LORD of hosts is His name."*** (Jer. 50:34). And let's not forget two prominent New Testament intercessors, Simeon, and Anna, who bear witness to the Christ child as the Redeemer (Luke 2:25-35; 36-38). The evidence is indisputable. Jesus Christ is ***"The LORD of hosts."***

Why is this important? It's important because every time the name of Jesus is spoken, spiritual battles rage. Even nations become battlefields. No other name causes so much attention and warfare. In fact, the rulers, scribes, elders, businessmen, etc. forbade the apostles from speaking to anyone in this name. The strategic prayer that followed presents a model for a new generation of Christ followers. The Classic Edition of the Amplified Bible (AMPC) helps us to better see the strategic dimensions of this battle in Acts 4.

- Acts 4:24-31 AMPC And when they heard it, lifted their voices together with one united mind to God and said, O Sovereign Lord, You are He Who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and everything that is in them, [Exod. 20:11; Ps. 146:6.] 25 Who by the mouth of our forefather David, Your servant and child, said through the Holy Spirit, Why did the heathen (Gentiles) become wanton and insolent and rage, and the people imagine and study and plan vain (fruitless) things [that will not succeed]? 26 The kings of the earth took their stand in array [for attack] and the rulers were assembled and combined together against the Lord and against His Anointed (Christ, the Messiah). [Ps. 2:1, 2.] 27 For in this city there actually met and plotted together against Your holy Child and Servant Jesus, Whom You consecrated by anointing, both Herod and Pontius Pilate with the Gentiles and peoples of Israel, [Ps. 2:1, 2.] 28 To carry out all that Your hand and Your will and purpose had predestined (predetermined) should occur. 29 And now, Lord, observe their threats and grant to Your bond servants [full freedom] to declare Your message fearlessly, 30 While You stretch out Your hand to cure and to perform signs and wonders through the authority and by the power of the name of Your holy Child and Servant Jesus. 31 And when they had prayed, the place in which they were assembled was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they continued to speak the Word of God with freedom and boldness and courage.

I believe this generation needs to face the battle with the forces of darkness in the same way. Why do we struggle so much when Christ has completely overcome the world?

- **John 16:33 AMPC** I have told you these things, so that in Me you may have [perfect] peace and confidence. In the world you have tribulation and trials and distress and frustration; but be of good cheer [take courage; be confident, certain, undaunted]! For I have overcome the world. [I have deprived it of power to harm you and have conquered it for you.]

Is it not our faith in Jesus that makes us victorious overcomers?

- **1 John 5:4-5 AMPC** For whatever is born of God is victorious over the world; and this is the victory that conquers the world, even our faith. 5 Who is it that is victorious over [that conquers] the world but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God [who adheres to, trusts in, and relies on that fact]?

The strategic prayers recorded in the Early Church reveal their faith in the name of Jesus. They were convinced that people could be saved, healed, and delivered by the authority and power in the name of Jesus. They trusted in the fact that Jesus had given them the authority and power through the Holy Spirit to use His name in advancing the Kingdom of God on earth. Young leaders must be reminded that it's not big buildings, finances, and large crowds, but faith in the name of Jesus that advances the Kingdom. Just think of it! Peter and John went to the temple at the hour of prayer. This was the same beautiful temple they had pridefully shown Jesus. But that enormous expensive building made of stone and its treasures of gold did not advance God's Kingdom. Rather, it was the healing of a lame man in the name of Jesus Christ that did!

- **Acts 3:6** Then Peter said, "Silver and gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk."

Note the authority in the name of Jesus. The name is not some kind of magical incantation, but the inherent presence and power in Christ working for the man. Jesus Christ is the one performing the miracle. This truth regarding His name appears 22 more times in Acts alone. Now, here's an important lesson for every young leader. Even though the people praised God, they looked upon Peter and John. In fact, they ran to Peter and John (Acts 3:9-11). They kept staring at them like they had done the healing by their own individual power or ability (3:12). However, Peter and John would have nothing to do with self-flattery and self-congratulations, or any attempt by people to give them credit for the miracle performed in the name of Jesus. Their focus and attention were upon Jesus Christ. They refused to take any credit for what He had done. Young leaders must learn this lesson as they preach and minister in His name. Look carefully what Peter said:

- **Acts 3:16 AMPC** And His name, through and by faith in His name, has made this man whom you see and recognize well and strong. [Yes] the faith which is through and by Him [Jesus] has given the man this perfect soundness [of body] before all of you.

The most severe threats did not stop them. Their response to earthly authorities (religious and otherwise) needs to be the same one today.

- Acts 4:8-12 Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, "Rulers of the people and elders of Israel: <sup>9</sup> "If we this day are judged for a good deed done to a helpless man, by what means he has been made well, <sup>10</sup> "let it be known to you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead, by Him this man stands here before you whole. <sup>11</sup> "This is the stone which was rejected by you builders, which has become the chief cornerstone.' <sup>12</sup> "Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved."

There are two prominent things that upset nations and people about the name of Jesus. One is the authority and power of His name and the other is the priestly and kingly dominion of His name. Much of the world today is in open battle against His all-powerful name. Although the church and heavenly saints rejoice, the forces of darkness tremble at the mere mention of His name. I sense in my spirit that the church and many believers have pulled away from a former level of faith in the name of Jesus. They tend to speak of God in general terms with the name of Jesus as a footnote. They do this at their own peril when the Risen Christ has given to us the authority and power to use His name in enforcing His victory as overcomers in the world. Jesus gave this authority and power to the twelve apostles, the Seventy, and to all believers.

- Luke 9:1 Then He called His twelve disciples together and gave them power and authority over all demons, and to cure diseases.
- Luke 10:17-20 Then the seventy returned with joy, saying, "Lord, even the demons are subject to us in Your name." <sup>18</sup> And He said to them, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. <sup>19</sup> "Behold, I give you the authority to trample on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you. <sup>20</sup> "Nevertheless do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven."
- Mark 16:17-20 "And these signs will follow those who believe: In My name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues; <sup>18</sup> "they will take up serpents; and if they drink anything deadly, it will by no means hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover." <sup>19</sup> So then, after the Lord had spoken to them, He was received up into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God. <sup>20</sup> And they went out and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them and confirming the word through the accompanying signs. Amen.

I believe many in the church do not understand spiritual authority. Therefore, it's very important to precisely define it as Jesus did. I like how Thayer's Greek lexicon isolates what authority means. It's *"the power of rule or government (the power of him whose will and commands must be submitted to by others and obeyed."*<sup>7</sup> In the context of the above verses this authority is the *"power over one, so as to be able to subdue, drive out, destroy."*<sup>8</sup> When we engage the enemy with a mountain moving level of active faith in the name of Jesus, the devil is stopped in his tracks. He must unwillingly and involuntarily submit to the will of the one exercising the authority. He's held submissive to God's will when we exercise this level of faith in the name of Jesus. This is due to the delegated authority we have in the name of Jesus **"over all demons."** This biblical truth

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<sup>7</sup> Thayer, J.H. Thayer's Greek Lexicon (1889) entry 1970.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

directly says Satan is the inferior one and believers have authority in the name of Jesus over evil spirits or the messengers and ministers of the devil, both individually and collectively. The NET Bible says this about the Greek construction of Luke 9:1. I believe this is another important message for every generation of leaders and believers:

"An aorist participle preceding an aorist main verb may indicate either contemporaneous (simultaneous) action ("When he called... he gave") or antecedent (prior) action ("After he called... he gave"). The participle συγκαλεσάμενος (*sunkalesamenos*) has been translated here as indicating antecedent action."<sup>9</sup>

I gleaned from this that standing in the battle against evil and dark forces requires both *prior* and *simultaneous* action on our part. We must understand this dimension of authority in the name of Jesus before launching into simultaneous preemptive action against the enemy. This means strategic prayer needs to be an offensive action as well as a unified collective action against demonic strongholds. In other words, the church needs to be on the same page with God and each other to be most effective.

Jesus also gave them the strength kind of power over demons and to heal the sick. Again, I think it's helpful to define what Jesus is saying as best we can. The Greek *dunamis* refers to "*inherent power, power residing in a thing by virtue of its nature, or which a person or thing exerts and puts forth.*"<sup>10</sup> This power is in Jesus, and He exerted it upon the souls of mankind by performing miracles. And now He gives it to us! Keep in mind that the major theme of Jesus throughout His earthly ministry is the Kingdom of God. This power in the name of Jesus also extends to preaching.

- **Luke 24:44-49** Then He said to them, "These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me." <sup>45</sup> And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures. <sup>46</sup> Then He said to them, "Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, <sup>47</sup> "and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. <sup>48</sup> "And you are witnesses of these things. <sup>49</sup> "Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high."

Jesus commands them to preach **"in His name to all nations."** There's too much casual, conversational, and motivational speaking today from church pulpits. The Early Church would not recognize this as the preaching of the Word. And neither does heaven! The apostles experienced a dramatic transformation in preaching after being filled with the Holy Spirit. Therefore, Jesus told them to wait until they were literally clothed with the power of the Holy Spirit.

On August 1, 2017, I received this Scripture for Nigeria and the nations:

- **Mark 9:1** And He said to them, "Assuredly, I say to you that there are some standing here who will not taste death till they see the kingdom of God present with power."

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<sup>9</sup> BibleWorks. NET Bible, Luke 9:1, note 3

<sup>10</sup> Thayer, J.H. Thayer's Greek Lexicon (1889) entry 1487.

I firmly believe this is a message for this generation. Interestingly, there's no future tense in this verse; only the implication and confirmation that Kingdom power was about to be unleashed. Those standing were about to see and know the power of God's Kingdom. Every standing generation must recover the authority and power in the name of Jesus. They must know that Jesus, the Redeemer, the LORD of hosts is all-powerful, and His name is a strong tower. What names of God does this generation need to reclaim? One name is Jesus as ***The LORD of hosts***. Run to and in His name with unwavering trust!

- **Jeremiah 50:34** Their Redeemer is strong; The LORD of hosts is His name. He will thoroughly plead their case, That He may give rest to the land, And disquiet the inhabitants of Babylon.
- **Proverbs 18:10** The name of the LORD is a strong tower; The righteous run to it and are safe.

# Teaching Series #2: Battle Array

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## Introduction

God speaks prophetically before He acts. God shares His battle plans with prophets who engage in strategic prayer. The Bible confirms this:

- **Amos 3:7 Surely the Lord GOD does nothing, Unless He reveals His secret to His servants the prophets.** (See also Rev. 10:7; Luke 24:27, 32, 44-45)

It's important to listen to the prophets before entering the battlefield if you want to be successful. I like the kingly leadership of King Jehoshaphat when he stood and said, ***"Believe in the LORD your God, and you shall be established; believe His prophets, and you shall prosper."*** (2Ch 20:20). This was spoken when they were getting ready to march against a coalition of enemy forces threatening to destroy God's people. It's interesting that to prosper means to *rush forward, to advance or succeed*. What does this involve? First, it involves coming into a preparatory position. Although they were in a state of fear, they set their hearts on seeking God in prayer and fasting.

- **2Chr. 20:5-12** Then Jehoshaphat stood in the assembly of Judah and Jerusalem, in the house of the LORD, before the new court, <sup>6</sup> and said: "O LORD God of our fathers, *are You not God in heaven, and do You not rule over all the kingdoms of the nations, and in Your hand is there not power and might, so that no one is able to withstand You?* <sup>7</sup> *Are You not our God, who drove out the inhabitants of this land before Your people Israel, and gave it to the descendants of Abraham Your friend forever?* <sup>8</sup> *And they dwell in it, and have built You a sanctuary in it for Your name, saying,* <sup>9</sup> *"If disaster comes upon us—sword, judgment, pestilence, or famine—we will stand before this temple and in Your presence (for Your name is in this temple), and cry out to You in our affliction, and You will hear and save."* <sup>10</sup> *And now, here are the people of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir—whom You would not let Israel invade when they came out of the land of Egypt, but they turned from them and did not destroy them—* <sup>11</sup> *here they are, rewarding us by coming to throw us out of Your possession which You have given us to inherit.* <sup>12</sup> *O our God, will You not judge them? For we have no power against this great multitude that is coming against us; nor do we know what to do, but our eyes are upon You."*

The above prayer involved ***all Judah with their little ones, wives, and children***. They all ***stood before the Lord!*** It was ***before the new court***. It is time for this generation to stand in the presence of the Lord to receive the depths of His counsel so we can be equipped for battle readiness. This generation is being summoned to a ***new court*** of strategic prayer before the Lord. The enemies of God today are seeking to also throw us out of our possession and inheritance in Christ. We have no power against the forces of darkness except for the power from on high. The strategic prayer before the Lord by Jehoshaphat and all Judah led to a prophetic word through a singer in the choir named, Jahaziel. Note that it was ***the Spirit of the LORD*** that came upon him.

- **2Chr. 20:14-17** Then the Spirit of the LORD came upon Jahaziel the son of Zechariah, the son of Benaiah, the son of Jeiel, the son of Mattaniah, a Levite of the sons of Asaph, in the midst of the assembly. <sup>15</sup> And he said, "Listen, all you of Judah and you inhabitants of

Jerusalem, and you, King Jehoshaphat! Thus says the LORD to you: ‘Do not be afraid nor dismayed because of this great multitude, for the battle *is* not yours, but God’s.’<sup>16</sup> Tomorrow go down against them. They will surely come up by the Ascent of Ziz, and you will find them at the end of the brook before the Wilderness of Jeruel.<sup>17</sup> You will not *need* to fight in this *battle*. Position yourselves, stand still and see the salvation of the LORD, who is with you, O Judah and Jerusalem!’ Do not fear or be dismayed; tomorrow go out against them, for the LORD *is* with you.”

One of the remarkable things that stands out about this prophetic word is that it came forth in the context of strategic prayer and intercession. It provides us with an example of how God works when we partner with Him in prayer. The Lord has what Bishop James Murunga calls a *navigation pattern* in the wilderness. I believe this also applies to the spiritual battlefield where divine placement is most needed before the fight. This is why this prophetic word calls God’s people to ***position yourselves***. This imperative instruction by the Spirit is prior to marching into battle. It means *to place or station oneself in order to stand*. It would resemble a Battalion Commander saying to his soldiers today as bombs fall from aircraft above on enemy positions, *Take your positions! Stand and watch the Lord deliver you!* Only in the case of Jehoshaphat, Judah, and Jerusalem, it is heaven victoriously engaging the enemy on their behalf. Much of the church today appears to be out of position. I believe there is a Holy Spirit guided strategy for every situation. The biblical example of Jehoshaphat and the people of God demonstrates how God prepares His people for battle through strategic prayer.

- Set our hearts to seek the Lord (2Chr. 20:3-4)
- Receive Holy Spirit Guided Strategy through prophetic intercession (2Chr. 20:14)
- Loudly worship and praise the Lord (2Chr. 20:18-19)
- Acknowledge and affirm the operation of God’s prophets (2Chr. 20:20)
- Consult with God’s people over revealed battle strategy (2Chr. 20:21)
- Obey and implement divine instructions (2Cor. 20:22)
- Rejoice in the Lord in the valley of Berachah (2Chr. 20:26-29)

If the new generation church is to be effective, it must give serious attention to these preparatory aspects of strategic prayer.

Is the church of this generation ready to march into battle? To do so, they must get into ***“battle array.”*** What does this mean? The Hebrew *arak* (aw-rak) is a military term referring to the drawing up in battle order prior to fighting on the battlefield. In other words, it describes the battle plan. This includes the strategic battle order and formation, the arrangement and use of weapons, rules of engagement, and the deployment of troops. These preparations bring the army into a high state of readiness. David’s army was extremely aware of the importance of battle order before engaging the enemy. One example is when the princes of Ammon humiliated the men David sent to comfort Hanun over his father’s death (1Chr. 19:2-4). He had them shaved and the middle of their trousers cut out displaying their buttocks. It was a strange way to repay David for his kindness and the Ammonites then hired the Syrian army to fight against David. The following account of the battles that ensued reveals the importance of putting the army in proper battle formation before going forward. Note how Joab adjusts his battle formation when he observed how the battle line was against him.

- 1Chr. 19:10-11 When Joab saw that the battle line was against him before and behind, he chose some of Israel's best, and put *them* in battle array against the Syrians. <sup>11</sup> And the rest of the people he put under the command of Abishai his brother, and they set *themselves* in battle array against the people of Ammon.
- 1Chr. 19:17 When it was told David, he gathered all Israel, crossed over the Jordan and came upon them, and set up in battle array against them. So when David had set up in battle array against the Syrians, they fought with him.

The emphasis upon preparatory positioning for battle is obvious in the above account and in many instances of warfare in the Bible.

I found another interesting war in the Bible between Israel and the Benjamites (Judges 19-21). The fact that three chapters are spent on this situation means there are some things we can learn to equip this generation for the spiritual battlefield. First, we must understand that this was a war within Israel against perversion by what is described as worthless and wicked men who wanted a man's guest to be brought out so that *they may know him carnally* (Judg. 19:22). The man begged them saying, ***do not act so wickedly*** and ***do not commit this outrage*** (Judg. 19:23). Instead, these men took the guest's concubine and abused her all night and then left her on the doorstep where she died (Judg. 19:26-28). The guest cut the woman into 12 pieces and sent them throughout all Israel (Judg. 19:29). The Israelites declared that no such thing had been done or seen since they had come up from the land of Egypt (Judg. 19:30). They challenged one another to ***consider it, confer, and speak up*** before gathering ***as one man before the Lord*** in preparation for war. The church today struggles in its approach to the LGBTQ movement. This has to change. Those caught up in the LGBTQ lifestyle need salvation and deliverance. Strong intercession is needed to set them free instead of normalizing this lifestyle. Chapter 20 of Judges depicts the actual battle preparations. Interestingly, Israel is not successful on the first two engagements. I also noticed that strategic prayer is intensified prior to each engagement.

- Judges 20:18 Then the children of Israel arose and went up to the house of God to inquire of God. They said, "Which of us shall go up first to battle against the children of Benjamin?" The LORD said, "Judah first!"
- Judges 20:22-23 And the people, that is, the men of Israel, encouraged themselves and again formed the battle line at the place where they had put themselves in array on the first day. <sup>23</sup> Then the children of Israel went up and wept before the LORD until evening, and asked counsel of the LORD, saying, "Shall I again draw near for battle against the children of my brother Benjamin?" And the LORD said, "Go up against him."
- Judges 20:26-29 Then all the children of Israel, that is, all the people, went up and came to the house of God and wept. They sat there before the LORD and fasted that day until evening; and they offered burnt offerings and peace offerings before the LORD. <sup>27</sup> So the children of Israel inquired of the LORD (the ark of the covenant of God was there in those days, <sup>28</sup> and Phinehas the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron, stood before it in those days), saying, "Shall I yet again go out to battle against the children of my brother Benjamin, or shall I cease?" And the LORD said, "Go up, for tomorrow I will deliver them into your hand." <sup>29</sup> Then Israel set men in ambush all around Gibeah.

The following chart documents from the above verses a growing intensity of intercession by the people of God. In addition, there are some changes in the battle line arrangements.

<b>Battle Array</b>	<b>Intensity of Intercession</b>
<i>Judg. 20:20 And the men of Israel went out to battle against Benjamin, and the men of Israel put themselves in battle array to fight against them at Gibeah.</i>	<b>First Day of Battle:</b> The people asked who should go first; Judah is to go first and set the battle arrangements. 22,000 Israelites killed by the Benjaminites.
<i>Judg. 20:22 And the people, that is, the men of Israel, encouraged themselves and again formed the battle line at the place where they had put themselves in array on the first day.</i>	<b>Second Day of Battle:</b> The people wept/lamented before the Lord until evening. They ask counsel after arranging themselves on the battle line. The Lord says, Go up! 18,000 Israelites killed by the Benjaminites. Note: 4,000 less than the day before.
<i>Judg. 20:29-30 Then Israel set men in ambush all around Gibeah. <sup>30</sup> And the children of Israel went up against the children of Benjamin on the third day, and put themselves in battle array against Gibeah as at the other times.</i>	<b>Third Day of Battle:</b> All the people wept/lamented and fasted until evening. They offered offerings. They inquire of the Lord before the Ark of the Covenant. The Priest Phinehas stands before the Ark and asks the Lord. The Lord says Go up for I will deliver! <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ambushes set up around Gibeah with 30 men.</li> <li>• Israel set in battle array with 10,000 men.</li> <li>• 25,100 Benjaminites killed</li> <li>• 30 Israelites killed by Benjamin</li> <li>• The Lord defeated Benjamin</li> </ul>

Did the above battle line arrangements and growing intensity of intercession lead to the victory on the battlefield. I could not help noticing this statement, ***The Lord defeated Benjamin before Israel*** (Judg. 20:35). Israel's army outnumbered Benjamin's by 400,000 (Judg. 20:17) to 26,700 counting the men of Gibeah (Judg. 20:15). These also included the 700-elite left-handed men of Benjamin. Still, Israel's losses during the first two days of battle were heavy. However, they decreased on each day. I see a correlation between the losses of 22,000 men of war to 18,000 to 30 and the growing intensity and strategic level of prayer.

The importance of strategic prayer and intercession cannot be overlooked in the order of battle and eventual triumph on the battlefield. We have looked in this second teaching series at several battles in the Bible where God's people get into ***"battle array."*** But how does this apply to us today? I'm confident God is calling this generation to take a battle stance against the evil in the world. This goes far beyond social justice. A young Assemblies of God pastor shared this:

"I see soldiers. I see warriors. It's a season to stand up, to stand strong, to stand firm on His word. It's not by power or by might but by the Spirit of the Lord (Zech. 4:6). I saw people standing firm like a soldier of the Lord, girded in truth, ready to go forward. (Eph. 6:14)."<sup>11</sup>

Immediately, I knew this was a prophetic message to the church. I was amazed to receive several messages in the following days from partners in Africa and Asia regarding the battle against evil forces and how the church needs to go on the offensive.

<sup>11</sup> Spoken by Pastor Heather Prosser, Celebration Church, Akron, OH. 1/15/17.

“Earlier today as I prayed with deep repentance and asking to see and Hear from the Lord, suddenly I saw an open Heaven. I saw the Lord with a golden crown on His Head.... what I saw gives me confidence to say this was The Lord. He called me up and ushered me into what looked like a Heavenly balcony and pointed into the horizon. I saw cities and nations all over. As I gazed on I suddenly saw Him direct my attention to what was under His Feet. There were all different kinds of creatures helpless and powerlessly lying there as He trampled on them. He ushered me to a place of actually joining Him trampling over these creatures that I eventually realized were demonic spirits and powers of darkness. As I reflect back on all He showed me, I Hear The Spirit of God say, I'm hereby activating my Remnant bride and warriors to the final charge. I have given you power and authority over powers of darkness. As you advance to take cities and nations for Me says the Lord, do not be afraid. I have shown you that my Spirit is upon you to guide you and lead you to fortified cities and regions but as you faithfully seek Me, I, says God will give you the victory. Arise in faith power and Love. Go in My name says the Lord.”<sup>12</sup>

“The Church is on the offensive, moving forward, enemy better get out of the way, the warriors are fully loaded with power of God and focused to carry on the message of the cross. Freedom for the captives, the ownership of the heart is registered in the name of Jesus.”<sup>13</sup>

During this time, I began to have a strong burden for the nation of Nigeria. I would awake during the night in a spirit of intercession. The burden was heavy upon me, pressing upon my heart. I began sharing with our key 5-Fold Global partner in Nigeria, Dr. Samuel Isong, telling him things like this:

“Nigeria is pressing so strongly. Caleb with much strength for war told Joshua, "Give me this mountain!" The enemy wants to take over Nigeria both in the natural and in the spiritual. God wants to enlarge the borders of His influence through you and wants to send the team to help you stretch out the tent pegs. Just say the word on His appointed time and we will come.”

I cancelled all other plans in obedience to the Lord. There was a cloud of darkness over Nigeria. I wrote again:

“The clouds of darkness over Nigeria appear as giants in the land. They are big until we compare the giants with God. These giants are tormenting the nation and your region. “If one man through darkness can usher in such giants in a region, then think of what one church through the light of the gospel of Christ can do.” Last evening at a church service, a young pastor, Jabin Chavez, preached on this at a Spirit filled mega church we attend near us. The worship team sang "Jesus, Jesus. You make the darkness tremble." I was so strengthened when I heard this and a thousand saints of all ages singing in unison. Strong intercession for Nigeria, you, and Bible Centered Life Ministries overwhelmed me. The Spirit will show you the new grounds and the team will come to instill the warrior spirit back into the church. It's time for the church to get into battle array. Revival is coming behind the clouds of darkness. The enemy cannot have Nigeria! “We do not choose the fight, but we must choose to fight,” the young pastor said. “The church will either bow down to the giants or stand up and fight!”

I hope you can see the strategic development and heavenly counsel that unfolds through strategic prayer and prophetic intercession. I pray what is presented will help equip this generation to align with God's word and put themselves in proper battle order to stand against and overcome the enemy.

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<sup>12</sup> Bishop James Murunga, Kenya. Facebook Post 2/13/17

<sup>13</sup> Sampath Kumar, India. Facebook Post 2/16/17

## The Armies of God

**“The LORD of hosts”** is a term referring to the LORD who commands armies. **“Hosts”** always appears in the plural form when referring to the name of the God. As we have learned, this is a special name for God. God often presents Himself in military terms.

- Psalm 24:7-10 Lift up your heads, O you gates! And be lifted up, you everlasting doors! And the King of glory shall come in. <sup>8</sup> Who is this King of glory? The LORD strong and mighty, The LORD mighty in battle. <sup>9</sup> Lift up your heads, O you gates! Lift up, you everlasting doors! And the King of glory shall come in. <sup>10</sup> Who is this King of glory? The LORD of hosts, He is the King of glory. Selah (Note: pause and think about that!)
- Isaiah 42:13 NAS The LORD will go forth like a warrior, He will arouse His zeal like a man of war. He will utter a shout, yes, He will raise a war cry. He will prevail against His enemies.
- Revelation 17:14 "These will make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb will overcome them, for He is Lord of lords and King of kings; and those who are with Him are called, chosen, and faithful."

The above references identify the Lord as a mighty, victorious warrior. The following chart shows some of the Hebrew and Greek words used with their meanings.

Hebrew/Greek Word	Meaning
<i>'izzuwz (iz-zooz')</i>	Powerfully strong
<i>gibbor (ghib-bore)</i>	Military warrior or brave champion in battle
<i>milchamah (mil-khaw-maw)</i>	A war or battle
<i>tsaba' (tsaw-baw')</i>	Armies/troops that go forth to fight
<i>rua (roo-ah)</i>	A roaring blast or shout going into battle; a war cry
<i>tsarach (tsaw-rakh)</i>	Raise and yell out the war cry or alarm for battle
<i>uwr (oor)</i>	Rouse, awaken, stir up to activity against an enemy force
<i>polemeo (pol-em-eh'-o)</i>	To war, carry out war, fight in battle
<i>nikao (nik-ah'-o)</i>	Triumph, be victorious, overcome and deprive it of power to harm and subvert its influence

The NET Bible notes say something very enlightening about these military terms.

“The imagery depicts the Lord as a warrior who is eager to fight and can no longer hold himself back from the attack.”<sup>14</sup>

Pay careful attention how Scripture describes the Lord as awakened for battle. I believe the church of this generation needs to be awakened to the fact there's a war going on. If the Lord inspires Himself for battle, then what should be the response of a new generation of warriors? After all, **“If God is for us, who can be against us?”** (Rom. 8:31). This all coincides with the Lord's victory march. And there can be no victory without engaging in strategic prayer and warfare. There can be no pacifists in the Lord's army. The army He commands is a fighting force to be reckoned with and He commands **“armies.”** These armies consist of those who do His will.

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<sup>14</sup> BibleWorks9, NET Bible (2011) note Isa 42:13.

- Psalm 103:20 Bless the LORD, you His angels, Who excel in strength, who do His word, Heeding the voice of His word. <sup>21</sup> Bless the LORD, all you His hosts, You ministers of His, who do His pleasure.

What are these armies under His command? I used to think there were two armies: one in heaven and one on earth. However, the Scriptures point to “armies” in heaven and on earth. Could there be more than one army in heaven? I discovered that when Jesus returns, **“the armies of heaven”** are with Him.

- Revelation 19:14 And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses.

I can only conclude from the word of God that there are two armies in heaven: an angelic army and an army of heavenly saints. These are the heavenly troops under the Lord’s command. This is confirmed by the biblical description of a heavenly angelic battle.

- Revelation 12:7 And war broke out in heaven: Michael and his angels fought with the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought.

The heavenly saints are not mentioned in this specific battle, but it does reveal there’s more than one army in heaven. Of course, there’s the defeated army of Satan and his angels that makes up a third army in the spirit realm. Although we know the devil and his angels were cast out of heaven, the battle now shifts to the earth.

- Revelation 12:12 "Therefore rejoice, O heavens, and you who dwell in them! Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and the sea! For the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, because he knows that he has a short time."
- Revelation 12:17 And the dragon was enraged with the woman, and he went to make war with the rest of her offspring, who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.

There’s also more than one army on the earth just like in heaven. I see in God’s Word three primary themes or metaphors used to communicate to us what God does, has planned, and wants to work through us. There’s the military theme or metaphor, the farming or agriculture one, and the athletic one framed in the imagery of running and wrestling. Each is used most effectively throughout the Bible in various contexts. However, I found one place where all of them are mentioned together:

- 2 Timothy 2:1-7 You therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. <sup>2</sup> And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also. <sup>3</sup> You therefore must endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. <sup>4</sup> No one engaged in warfare entangles himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please him who enlisted him as a soldier. <sup>5</sup> And also if anyone competes in athletics, he is not crowned unless he competes according to the rules. <sup>6</sup> The hard-working farmer must be first to partake of the crops. <sup>7</sup> Consider what I say, and may the Lord give you understanding in all things.

Although I come from many generations of farmers and was an aspiring athlete, it was my military experience as a combat Marine in Vietnam and later as a Navy Chaplain

that had the most influence over me. In the above passage, God is saying He enlists us into His army, and we are to be shaped into first rate soldiers. Athletes run and farmers sow and reap, but soldiers fight battles and win wars. Therefore, the church on earth can be compared to an army of soldiers for Christ. This is one army on earth: the church of the living God. God advances His spiritual rule on earth through His church.

- Ephesians 3:10-11 AMPC [The purpose is] that through the church the complicated, many-sided wisdom of God in all its infinite variety and innumerable aspects might now be made known to the angelic rulers and authorities (principalities and powers) in the heavenly sphere. 11 This is in accordance with the terms of the eternal and timeless purpose which He has realized and carried into effect in [the person of] Christ Jesus our Lord,

There are also the armies of the nation of Israel and those of all the nations on earth. Remember what young David told the giant, ***"I come to you in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defiled."*** (1Sam. 17:45). God uses earthly armies of the nations to fulfill His purposes on earth. For example, He used the Medes to destroy Babylon.

- Jeremiah 51:11 AMPC Make clean and sharp the arrows, take up the shields or coats of armor [and cover your bodies with them]! The Lord has stirred up the spirit of the kings of the Medes [who with the Persians will destroy the Babylonian Empire], for His purpose concerning Babylon is to destroy it; for that is the vengeance of the Lord, the vengeance [upon Babylon for the plundering and destruction] of His temple.

This was the nation that God had used to deliver Israel and Judah into captivity in response to their rampant idolatry and evil abominations against God. The prophet Isaiah also saw the destruction of Babylon. In this case God summons unidentified troops.

- Isaiah 13:1-5 The burden against Babylon which Isaiah the son of Amoz saw. <sup>2</sup> "Lift up a banner on the high mountain, Raise your voice to them; Wave your hand, that they may enter the gates of the nobles. <sup>3</sup> I have commanded My sanctified ones; I have also called My mighty ones for My anger-- Those who rejoice in My exaltation." <sup>4</sup> The noise of a multitude in the mountains, Like that of many people! A tumultuous noise of the kingdoms of nations gathered together! The LORD of hosts musters The army for battle. <sup>5</sup> They come from a far country, From the end of heaven-- The LORD and His weapons of indignation, To destroy the whole land.

Are these (consecrated and set apart warriors) heavenly armies engaged against Babylon and various nations? Do these judgment battles reflect spiritual warfare throughout the world? It appears that heavenly armies are involved in addition to those of the nations. This seems to be pointing to the end times and the warfare outlined in Revelation 12:1-17. How important is it to the church of this generation for God to go out with our army of spiritual warriors? Do we pray for restoration like David prayed?

- Psalm 60:9-12 Who will bring me to the strong city? Who will lead me to Edom? <sup>10</sup> Is it not You, O God, who cast us off? And You, O God, who did not go out with our armies? <sup>11</sup> Give us help from trouble, For the help of man is useless. <sup>12</sup> Through God we will do valiantly, For it is He who shall tread down our enemies.

This generation will not be able to be successful in Kingdom Power and Advancement unless it's willing to fight as soldiers of Christ and unless God goes with the army.

- **Psalm 18:28-29 For You will light my lamp; The LORD my God will enlighten my darkness. <sup>29</sup> For by You I can run against a troop, By my God I can leap over a wall.**

The above verses are very telling. In the strength and power of God, we have the capacity to perform this valiant, courageous action against the enemy. God has given you in Christ military superiority over evil principalities. Note we can **“run against a troop.”** This means you can charge against the forces of evil. I like what the NET Bible notes say about this. It's *“the picture of a divinely empowered warrior charging against an army in almost superhuman fashion.”*<sup>15</sup> David both prayed and sang about this. The warrior spirit needs to be restored in the church. God is calling this generation to align with heaven's battle cry. This strategic prayer is one the church needs to be praying:

“May you Oh Lord light our hearts with your Spirit and Truth. May darkness be swallowed up with your light. Lord unite your church into a strong kingdom force that no force of darkness will stop us. Strengthen us Lord. We ask that we can stand every storm and be witnesses of your grace and power. In Jesus Christ, we stand and pray.”<sup>16</sup>

## **God's Armory**

I've seen by reading through the Bible again and setting under anointed and balanced teaching of God's word, an intensifying of strategic prayer and spiritual warfare over the nations. The end is much closer than when we first believed so we must be ready. I've learned from God's word that, not only does He have armies, but God has an armory too.

- **Jeremiah 50:25 The LORD has opened His armory, And has brought out the weapons of His indignation; For this is the work of the Lord GOD of hosts In the land of the Chaldeans.**

An armory in military terms is the place where weapons and ammunition are stored. Of course, the immediate context entails God using nations as His war club against evil Babylon. However, we must also be aware that there's a future prophetic significance when viewed in the context of the cosmic war with the spirit of Babylon in Revelation. The Bible calls this end time Babylon, **“MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT; THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.”** (Rev. 17:5). The Amplified Bible says this name is **“with a secret symbolic meaning”** and this Babylon is **“the mother of prostitutes (idolatresses) and of the filth and atrocities and abominations of the earth.”** (Rev. 17:5 AMPC). Furthermore, according to the word of God, this end time Babylon becomes **“a dwelling place of demons.”**

- **Revelation 18:2-3 And he cried mightily with a loud voice, saying, "Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and has become a dwelling place of demons, a prison for every foul spirit,**

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<sup>15</sup> BibleWorks9, NET Bible (2011) note Psalms 18:29.

<sup>16</sup> Bishop James Murunga, Kenya. Facebook Post 2/23/17.

**and a cage for every unclean and hated bird! <sup>3</sup> "For all the nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth have become rich through the abundance of her luxury."**

Scripture reveals that nations, earthly kings, and businessmen are involved with this demonic commander of darkness. Therefore, when the prophets describe the nature of the warfare against Babylon, there's a future application. Before I continue with God's armory, I want to share more about the spiritual war over the nation of Nigeria. Dr. Isong wrote this to me on June 5, 2017, as we continued preparations for the strategic mission in Nigeria.

"The revelation of thick cloud of darkness over Nigeria you saw is so real and unfolding daily. The persecution of the gospel is on the increase. All key political and appointed offices are now handled by Muslims, they form the major in the house of Senate. They are now changing the curriculum of primary and high school to remove anything Christian religion. Hunger is on the increase in Christian States and communities, many are dying already of starvation. Most young pastors are beginning to embrace occultic altars to work miracles, they compromise the gospel to pull crowds, to make ends meet. Therefore, 5fold Global operation is timely and God's plan."

The Lord showed me the mission to Nigeria would be directed by His word, so I positioned myself to read again through the entire Bible. As I shared earlier, I learned and discovered much that is reflected in my replies to Dr. Isong.

"God has revealed to me that the spirit of Babylon is running loose and He's telling 5-Fold Global on this mission to **"Put yourselves in array against Babylon all around, all you who bend the bow; shoot at her, spare no arrows for she has sinned against the Lord. Shout against her all around...The Lord has opened His armory and has brought out the weapons of His indignation; for this is the work of the Lord...come against her from the farthest border...call together the archers against Babylon, all you who bend the bow, encamp against it all around...for she has been proud against the Lord, against the Holy One of Israel...Behold I am against you, O most haughty one! says the Lord God of hosts; for your day has come..."** (Jer. 50:14-15, 25-26, 29, 31). I'm paying very close attention to God's word as the word of God is coming to us for this mission. Glory to His powerful name! My heart is broken for the young pastors who are erring and causing God's people to error. I just read in the Revival Bible on Ezekiel 13 that false revivalists function as messengers of Babylonian seduction. Ezekiel says, **"You have not gone up into the gaps to build a wall for the house of Israel to stand in battle on the day of the Lord. They have envisioned futility and false divination..."** (13:5-6). Babylonian captives will be set free on this mission for the glory of God. We must hear the counsel of the Lord against the spirit of Babylon and set up the standard of the Lord against her, make the guard strong, set up the watchmen and prepare the ambushes **"for the Lord has both devised and done what He spoke against"** it. Because **"Our Redeemer is strong AND THE Lord of Hosts is His name!"** A sound of battle is in the land of Nigeria!"

God has a storehouse of weapons available for the church to deal with the spirit of Babylon and any other evil principality. The weapons in His armory can do what they were designed for. This generation is ignoring the high-level prayer and warfare described in God's word. They have not gone to God's armory to check out and be trained in the use of the available weapons of warfare. There's too much focus on themselves and human talent and abilities for success. All the collective human talent in the world will not make one demon tremble. The weapons in God's armory are spiritual; not carnal. They have the inherent power to get the job done.

- **2 Corinthians 10:3-6 AMPC** For though we walk (live) in the flesh, we are not carrying on our warfare according to the flesh and using mere human weapons. 4 For the weapons of our warfare are not physical [weapons of flesh and blood], but they are mighty before God for the overthrow and destruction of strongholds, 5 [Inasmuch as we] refute arguments and theories and reasonings and every proud and lofty thing that sets itself up against the [true] knowledge of God; and we lead every thought and purpose away captive into the obedience of Christ (the Messiah, the Anointed One), 6 Being in readiness to punish every [insubordinate for his] disobedience, when your own submission and obedience [as a church] are fully secured and complete.

You may have noticed that I often use the term strategic in this teaching series. This is not by accident, but to align with God's word on the nature of spiritual warfare. For example, the Greek word for war or warfare in the above verses is the plural verb *strateuomai* (strat-yoo'-om-ahee) followed by the noun *strateia* (strat-l'-ah). The verb means "*to make a military expedition, to lead soldiers to war or battle, to do military duty, be on active service, be a soldier, to fight.*" It must be noted that we are on active duty according to God's word. This generation acts like they're on reserve duty rather than active. The noun refers to "*an expedition, campaign, military service, warfare.*" Why is this important? The church needs to realign with God's word when it comes to spiritual warfare and strategic prayer. Paul understood his apostolic ministry with all its difficulties as warfare. Does this generation have the same understanding when it comes to resistance against evil forces? It's also important to realize that evil and demonic forces don't require a human response, but a powerful spiritual one. Demonic forces can be overthrown. Jesus destroyed all the works of the devil, so we have in God's armory the spiritual weapons to live and walk in triumph in **every place**.

- **2 Corinthians 2:14** Now thanks be to God who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and through us diffuses the fragrance of His knowledge in every place.

The weapons in God's armory have divine power. They're more powerful in the spiritual sense than a nuclear warhead is in the natural. In this section, I will present four of the most neglected and powerful weapons in God's armory: the shield of faith, the sword of the Spirit, praying in the Spirit, and the name of Jesus. Although all the weapons in God's armory are laced with divine power, these four are displayed repeatedly throughout the Early Church. Three of the four appear in one great warfare passage.

- **Ephesians 6:10-20** Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. <sup>11</sup> Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. <sup>12</sup> 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. <sup>13</sup> 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. <sup>14</sup> Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, <sup>15</sup> and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; <sup>16</sup> above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. <sup>17</sup> And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; <sup>18</sup> praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with

all perseverance and supplication for all the saints-- <sup>19</sup> and for me, that utterance may be given to me, that I may open my mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel, <sup>20</sup> for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.

The above passage contains end time instructions in the context of warfare with demonic forces. It begins with an encouraging imperative verb to be empowered with the strength and dominion power that comes from the Lord. There's every indication in God's word that the baptism with the Holy Spirit was the time when the Apostles and New Testament believers received this divine, overcoming power. One reason many churches and disciples are floundering in the face of ongoing cultural and spiritual warfare is they are not Spirit Filled. This generation needs empowered, but this will not happen if it rejects the way God gives the power. The words in the passage we are looking at are most telling. Take note of the battle imagery, divine positioning, and weapon effectiveness available to us in God's armory. These are all superior weapons of warfare designed to be deployed in strategic prayer, intercession, and warfare.

The Church/Believers	Satan	Weapons (Armor)
Be Strong (empowered)	Wiles (schemes, deceitful strategies)	Truth (belt)
Put on (clothe)	Principalities (ruling spirits)	Righteousness/Blood of Christ (breastplate)
Stand against (position yourself)	Powers (demonic angels)	The Gospel of Christ(helmet)
Wrestle against (contest to throw down)	Rulers of darkness (evil spirits)	Faith (shield)
Take up (carry to use)	Spiritual wickedness (demonic forces)	Salvation (shoes)
Withstand (resist)	Evil day (perilous time)	The Word of God (sword of the Spirit)
Stand (place of advantage)	Fiery darts (missiles, arrows)	Praying in the Spirit (communication)
Gird (fasten), Shod (fit), Quench (extinguish), Praying always (in the Spirit)	All of the above	All of the above

These words reveal a battle imagery that is real and must be taken seriously. The Greek presents an even clearer picture of the warfare. For example, the standing battle position in verse 11 against satanic army strategies is *histemi pros* (his'-tay-mee). The preposition *pros* implies movement toward the battlefield. The Greek *pale* (pal'-ay) in verse 12 is descriptive of hand-to-hand combat. And the Greek *antihistemi* is used in verse 13, intensifies the assault against the enemy network. And the preposition *pros* is again used in the context of wrestling against principalities, etc. It refers to a battle contest between two in which each tries to throw the other down. The victor is the one who can hold his opponent down with his hand or foot upon his neck. This is all referring to the spiritual war against evil forces. Therefore, this entire battle is not about the church just hanging on until Jesus returns. It's about demolishing demonic strongholds in God's power. It's about crushing Satan under our feet (Rom. 16:20). And this battle is not talking about past victories, but present victories over the powers of darkness.

This generation needs to regain an advantageous battle position. This advantageous place is **“in God”** and more specifically in His power. Four of five great power words in the Bible are used in the Ephesians 6 passage.

**1. *exousia* – delegated authority (See Matt. 28:18; Luke 9:1-2; 10:19)**

From G1832 (in the sense of *ability*); *privilege*, that is, (subjectively) *force*, *capacity*, *competency*, *freedom*, or (objectively) *mastery* (concretely *magistrate*, *superhuman*, *potentate*, *token of control*), *delegated influence*: —authority, jurisdiction, liberty, power, right, strength

**2. *dunamis* – miraculous power (Eph. 6:10, 11, 16; see also Acts 1:8)**

From G1410; *force* (literally or figuratively); specifically miraculous *power* (usually by implication a *miracle* itself): —ability, abundance, meaning, might (-ily, -y, -y deed), (worker of) miracle (-s), power, strength, violence, mighty (wonderful) work.

**3. *ischuros* – intense strength & ability over external forces (Eph. 6:10; see also Eph. 1:19; 1Pet. 4:11; Rev. 18:2)**

From G2479; *forcible* (literally or figuratively): —boisterous, mighty (-ier), powerful, strong (-er, man), valiant.

**4. *kratos* – dominion/ruling power (Eph. 6:10; see also Acts 19:20; Rev. 5:13)**

Perhaps a primary word; *vigor* [“great”], (literally or figuratively): —dominion, might [-ily], power, strength.

**5. *parrhesia* – divine enabling (Eph. 6:20; also see Acts 4:31)**

Boldness, outspokenness, unreserved utterance, courage, a divine enablement that comes upon a person as the result of being filled with the Holy Spirit; a boldness that exhibits spiritual power and authority in Christ; not a human quality.

What does all this mean? It means the weapons in God’s armory are all powerful. The complete armor has complete power. Soldiers of Christ fight from a position of strength. Although all these weapons are laced with divine power, there are four that stand out in Scripture. They are like spiritual missiles with nuclear warheads. I’m talking about ***the sword of the Spirit, the shield of faith, praying in the Spirit, and the name of Jesus***. The battle stance against unseen satanic structures requires the highest level of use or deployment of these four weapons in particular. It also appears that they are offensive weapons to take on the legions being commanded by the enemy.

The **“*sword of the Spirit*”** is clearly identified as the word of God. No other interpretation is necessary. The word of God is described as a two-edged sword five times in Scripture.

- **Psalm 149:6** Let the high praises of God be in their mouth, And a two-edged sword in their hand,
- **Hebrews 4:12** For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart.
- **Revelation 1:16** He had in His right hand seven stars, out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword, and His countenance was like the sun shining in its strength.

- Revelation 2:12 "And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write, 'These things says He who has the sharp two-edged sword:
- Revelation 19:15 Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.

As the sword of the Spirit, the word of God is sharper on both sides. I couldn't help noticing that this sword is described as in the hand and out of the mouth. This reminds me of at least two things. One is the word of faith in the context of preaching.

- Romans 10:8 But what does it say? "The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart " (that is, the word of faith which we preach):

The other is the use of God's word (the sword of the Spirit) in spiritual warfare. I remember **"the Commander of the LORD's army"** who appeared to Joshua prior to the battle for Jericho.

- Joshua 5:13-15 And it came to pass, when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted his eyes and looked, and behold, a Man stood opposite him with His sword drawn in His hand. And Joshua went to Him and said to Him, "Are You for us or for our adversaries?" <sup>14</sup> So He said, "No, but as Commander of the army of the LORD I have now come." And Joshua fell on his face to the earth and worshiped, and said to Him, "What does my Lord say to His servant?" <sup>15</sup> Then the Commander of the LORD'S army said to Joshua, "Take your sandal off your foot, for the place where you stand is holy." And Joshua did so.

The Lord's army has a commander who leads the troops just like an earthly army. Why was this divine appearance necessary? The foreknowledge that Joshua could now enter battle, knowing indivisible heavenly troops would participate and ensure victory under the direct leadership of the Messiah, had to be a great and assuring advantage. I like the fact that Joshua humbled himself and obediently worshipped the Christ. In addition, the Commander's sword is **"drawn in His hand."** God wants us to know that He's ready to fight with us against the forces of darkness. We know this is the case because Jesus is commanding God's army in Revelation 19. Furthermore, Jesus overcame the devil in the wilderness by deploying the written Word. Jesus responded to each temptation with these words, **"It is written..."** (Matt. 4:1-11). He spoke the Word. He used the word of God as a sword against Satan. The NET Bible notes fully describe the nature of a sword in battle.

"The Greek term translated *sword* (μάχαίρα, *machaira*) refers to the Roman *gladius*, a short sword about 2 ft (60 cm) long, used for close hand-to-hand combat. This is the only clearly offensive weapon in the list of armor mentioned by the author (he does not, for example, mention the lance [Latin *pilum*])."<sup>17</sup>

This generation must regain the Kingdom momentum of God's word. It's also important to know the distinction between the Greek terms' *logos* and *rhema* in the Bible. *Logos* refers to the entire Bible and *rhema* is an applicable verse or verses of the Bible. The reference in Ephesians 6:17 is to that *rhema* portion of the Bible which believers use as a sword or weapon of the Spirit. Although the Word (*logos*) was

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<sup>17</sup> BibleWorks9 (2011) NET Bible Eph 6:17 note 36.

preached, spread, and became the ruling force over believers in the Early Church (Acts 4:31; 6:7; 8:4; 12:24), the Word (*rhema*) went forth like laser guided missiles to designated enemy targets. Any believer, church, or generation that diminishes the credibility of God's word, does so at its own peril. A dull or undrawn sword, or a sword without the Spirit is ineffective against satanic structures and territorial spirits.

Remember, this is a clearly offensive weapon. This generation looks weak when it comes to spiritual battle. Their swords are not sharpened in God's word. Their swords are not drawn ready for spiritual combat. This is a very serious situation. It's one that reflects a very casual approach to the word of God. Renowned author and lecturer, Os Guinness, describes the fight in an interview with CBN News. Here are a few excerpts:

"The scandal of the American Church is that it's a huge majority of Americans, and yet has less cultural influence than tiny minorities such as the LGBTQ population, which is less than two percent of America, but punch well above their weight. The Church has assimilated into American culture and has lost its salty character. You take, say, authority. Consumerism has come in, so we're no longer a people under the authority of Jesus, or the authority of the scriptures. Things like, pick and choose the church of your choice, the music of your choice, and so on. Preferentialism has riddled the Church and is causing people to lose reverence for the Holy Word of God and thus undermined the authority of Jesus. American preaching is soft and shallow in all sorts of ways. We need revival, reformation within the Church. We need to go back to scripture and say, are we living up to the calling, the charge that Jesus gave us, or not? We gotta really see, are we closer to the world or to what Christ called us to be?"<sup>18</sup>

Culture only gains the upper hand when God's word is no longer the ruling authority. However, there should be no lack of confidence entering the battlefield when the Lord is with us. This should be the battle stance and attitude:

- **Romans 8:31 What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?**
- **Romans 8:37 Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us.**

The "**shield of faith**" is specifically underscored among the weapons in God's armory. Some translations say, "**Above all.**" Some say, "**In everything**" or "**in all circumstances.**" The AMPC says, "**Lift up over all.**" The level or depth of faith determines the effectiveness of every weapon. It's important to understand that these battlefield instructions are given to the church, to believers. They've already been saved so the "**shield of faith**" is not talking about saving faith. This faith is that which moves mountains. It's the faith the disciples approached Jesus about saying, "**Lord, Increase our faith.**" Pastor Mike Cameneti of Faith Family Church in North Canton, Ohio, recently presented a very insightful teaching on this kind of faith. Here are some of the things he said in the preaching series:

"Faith toward God is elementary. Faith only comes the way the Bible says. Faith comes by the Word of God and no other way. Faith is never static. It's either growing or being starved. Faith is what moves stuff. Don't need big faith to move a tree. Are you going to release faith into the situation or just stare at it? If you have faith, do something. Saying what God says about it, starts to do something. What you see is subject to

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<sup>18</sup> Os Guinness, Christian Broadcasting Network Interview, *How the Church is Failing to Protect Freedom in America*. 8/17/17

change. Fear is a faith killer. If you are going to trust God for something you must get the Word into your heart. Faith needs fed. Faith needs exercised. Faith works by supply (grace) and demand (faith). Put the Word in and speak the Word out. Faith can do great things if you stay focused. No matter what, God is able to perform what He has said."

Of course, the Pastor thoroughly backed up these statements with God's word. I benefitted much from this teaching series and sensed my faith level was on the rise in the spiritual battle for Nigeria and the nations. Here are just a few faith passages in the Bible confirming the importance of faith as a shield.

- **Hebrews 11:1-3** **AMPC** NOW FAITH is the assurance (the confirmation, the title deed) of the things [we] hope for, being the proof of things [we] do not see and the conviction of their reality [faith perceiving as real fact what is not revealed to the senses]. 2 For by [faith-trust and holy fervor born of faith] the men of old had divine testimony borne to them and obtained a good report. 3 By faith we understand that the worlds [during the successive ages] were framed (fashioned, put in order, and equipped for their intended purpose) by the word of God, so that what we see was not made out of things which are visible.
- **Hebrews 11:6** But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.
- **Romans 10:17** So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.
- **Luke 17:5-6** And the apostles said to the Lord, "Increase our faith." 6 So the Lord said, "If you have faith as a mustard seed, you can say to this mulberry tree, 'Be pulled up by the roots and be planted in the sea,' and it would obey you.
- **Mark 11:22-24** So Jesus answered and said to them, "Have faith in God. 23 "For assuredly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, 'Be removed and be cast into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that those things he says will be done, he will have whatever he says. 24 "Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them.
- **2 Corinthians 5:7** For we walk by faith, not by sight.

One of things I noticed in looking at these Scriptures and others is that this "now" faith increases or is added to when connected with God's word and the Spirit. This generation is losing the word of God. Believers must reconnect with the Word, or no mountains are going to move; no trees uprooted; no giants slain. There's too much trust in human wisdom and abilities in the church. Believers need to sharpen the sword and anoint the shield. Why? Because our faith is to be in the power of God and not human wisdom, talents, or abilities. Paul makes this crystal clear:

- **1 Corinthians 2:1-5** And I, brethren, when I came to you, did not come with excellence of speech or of wisdom declaring to you the testimony of God. 2 For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified. 3 I was with you in weakness, in fear, and in much trembling. 4 And my speech and my preaching were not with persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, 5 that your faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.

On more than one occasion, Jesus questioned His disciples on their faith. This is a primary issue of Jesus when He returns. Look at this chart and ask yourself, "*If Jesus returned today, would He find faith in you?*"

Situation/Scripture	Statement/Question
Jesus praying on land, disciples in midst of storm at sea, Jesus walks on the sea; Peter walks & sinks (Matt. 14:22-33)	O you of little faith, why did you doubt?" (Matt. 14:31)
Jesus sleeping on boat during windstorm (Mark 4:35-41; Luke 8:22-25)	Why are you so fearful? How is it that you have no faith? (Mark 4:40) Where is your faith? (Luke 8:25)
Jesus teaching on material concerns about the physical necessities of life (Luke 12:22-34)	O you of little faith? (Luke 12:28)
Jesus casts out demons in a boy when disciples could not (Matt. 17:14-21; Mark 9:14-29)	O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I bear with you? (Matt. 17:17; Mark 9:19) "Because of your unbelief; for assuredly, I say to you, if you have faith as a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you. (Matt. 17:20)
Jesus' teaching about prayer with the Parable of the Persistent Widow (Luke 18:1-8)	Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on the earth? (Luke 18:8)
Jesus interceding for Peter (Luke 22:31-34)	But I have prayed for you, that your faith not fail; (Luke 22:32)

Each of these situations involved a battle with something. Apart from Jesus, the faith to do something was lacking. It's clear that the **"shield of faith"** is not being deployed and in some cases improperly deployed. Before I go any further, let's get a glimpse of what the culture understood about a shield. The NET Bible notes again provide a very detailed description of the Roman military shield and what was historically called the **"tortoise"** formation:

"The Greek word translated *shield* (θυσέος, *thureos*) refers to the Roman soldier's large rectangular wooden shield, called in Latin *scutum*, about 4 ft (1.2 m) high, covered with leather on the outside. Before a battle in which flaming arrows might be shot at them, the soldiers wet the leather covering with water to extinguish the arrows. The Roman legionaries could close ranks with these shields, the first row holding theirs edge to edge in front, and the rows behind holding the shields above their heads. In this formation, they were practically invulnerable to arrows, rocks, and even spears."<sup>19</sup>

The biblical imagery reveals the importance of our faith being anointed by the water of the Word and the Holy Spirit. This combination is the mother of all bombs (MOAB) when it comes to spiritual warfare. The faith involved with the shield is that which Paul instructed Timothy about.

- **1 Timothy 6:12 Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, to which you were also called and have confessed the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.**

Every generation must fight for this overcoming faith against adversaries. This generation must regain a fighting spirit and attitude aligned with God's word. It's an intense competition. The **"good confession"** (*kalos homologia*) refers to speaking that which aligns or is harmonious with God's word. Paul recognized that it was a battle, and that this active faith was lacking in many believers. He brought them hope that something could be done about it. He fervently prayed for the believers in Thessalonica.

<sup>19</sup> BibleWorks9 (2011) NET Bible Eph 6:16 note 34.

- 1 Thessalonians 3:10 AMPC [And we] continue to pray especially and with most intense earnestness night and day that we may see you face to face and mend and make good whatever may be imperfect and lacking in your faith.

There's a poverty of faith in this generation. The shield is no good without faith and faith can be increased. Believe it!

This third dominate weapon in God's armory has been notably displayed and deployed in most if not all historical revivals. Although very prominently displayed in the Early Church, this weapon is diminished and left dormant, for the most part, by the 21<sup>st</sup> century church. I'm talking about ***"praying in the Spirit"*** (Eph. 6:18). This is a weapon that is again connected with all the preceding instructions of Ephesians 6. In fact, ***"praying in the Spirit"*** is the means through which the armament instructions are accomplished. The use of two verbal participles (*praying...being alert*) connects this weapon with the four participles (*fastening...putting on...fitting...taking up*) used in the previous verses on the full armor of God. There's also the connection with all the previous power words. Why does the church today resist praying in the Spirit? I believe it revolves around the tongue. I'm not going to get analytical here about the subject. I only seek to speak about what God's word says and encourage this generation to believe and align with the Word. The primary and most prominent display of praying in the Spirit in the New Testament Church involved *glossolalia* or speaking in tongues. Here's what the web's largest resource for definitions says about it:

"Glossolalia or speaking in tongues is the fluid vocalizing of speech-like syllables that lack any readily comprehended meaning in some cases as part of religious practice. The significance of glossolalia has varied in context with some minorities considering it as a part of a sacred language. It is most prominently practiced within Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity but it is also practiced in non-Christian religions. Glossolalia also sometimes refers to xenoglossia the putative speaking of a natural language previously unknown to the speaker."<sup>20</sup>

Although we can take some issue with several aspects of how the secular world defines *glossolalia*, they do recognize that speaking in tongues is practiced today by Spirit-Filled believers within Pentecostal and Charismatic churches. (Note: This should be the case of the whole church!) They also resist the temptation of putting the practice in a negative light; a temptation many churches have been unable to resist. I've observed over the years that many Pentecostal and Charismatic churches no longer encourage *glossolalia*. Leaders are not teaching or ministering the Baptism with the Spirit evidenced by speaking in tongues. As a result, this weapon is being restricted and left in God's armory. I want to help this generation to deploy this weapon in warfare and strategic level prayer. For a complete teaching on the Baptism with the Holy Spirit and tongues, I refer you to two training manuals: *The Holy Spirit and You* and the course for Bible students, *Pneumatology 101*.<sup>21</sup> I encourage this generation of leaders and believers to review these to attain a strong biblical foundation regarding the Holy Spirit.

Jesus viewed tongues as one of the signs that follow believers (Mark 16:17). This means speaking in ***"new tongues"*** is an important practice for believers. The fact that

<sup>20</sup> <http://www.definitions.net/definition/Glossolalia> 8/21/17

<sup>21</sup> These 5-Fold Global resources are available free at <https://5foldglobal.net> and on the mobile app.

this sign is “*new*” reveals a uniquely New Testament sign or miraculous mark. **“Praying in the Spirit”** is clearly linked with **“speaking in tongues”** in God’s word. This is confirmed when Paul taught the Corinthians the difference between the manifestation gift of tongues with interpretation in the church and the heavenly prayer language used by all Spirit Filled believers in worship and prayer.

- **1 Corinthians 14:14-15** For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but my understanding is unfruitful. <sup>15</sup> What is the conclusion then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will also pray with the understanding. I will sing with the spirit, and I will also sing with the understanding.

Does this mean praying in tongues is **“praying in the Spirit?”** I believe it does because it’s what the Word says. Why doesn’t the church encourage believers in this? One reason is that many leaders have not experienced the Holy Spirit in this way. It’s difficult to see the value in something from a distance. Why are many Spirit-Filled leaders not encouraging believers to pray in the Spirit today? Maybe they love the praise of men more than the praise of God. Maybe they have different priorities for the church. Maybe they are bound by their respective denomination. Regardless, this generation must identify and deploy this weapon in spiritual battle and strategic prayer. I want to go beyond the basic value of this weapon for self-edification and worship to its strategic value. Remember, the dominant weapons in God’s armory being highlighted are linked with each other and all the other weapons in God’s armory. One of the strategic values of this weapon is that it builds up faith in those who practice it.

- **Jude 1:20 AMPC** But you, beloved, build yourselves up [founded] on your most holy faith [make progress, rise like an edifice higher and higher], praying in the Holy Spirit;

The devil knows if faith increases in this generation, then God’s kingdom will usurp his dominion over territories of the world. Many captives will be set free when believers make progress. Again, the verb participle, *praying*, reveals a continuing practice. Progress is accelerated when believers pray in the Holy Spirit. Therefore, many more captives are set free. Let faith arise!

Another strategic value of praying in the Holy Spirit is that the plans of God are revealed. Paul only wanted others to consider him a servant of Christ and a steward of the mysteries of God (1Cor. 4:1). Furthermore, he taught that those who pray in the Spirit speak to God.

- **1 Corinthians 14:2** For he who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men but to God, for no one understands him; however, in the spirit he speaks mysteries.

Mysteries (the secret purposes of God) are being spoken by the Holy Spirit. It’s conceivable that the mystery of the Gospel to the Gentiles was unveiled to Paul as he continually prayed in the Holy Spirit. I’m captured by this thought as I examine this segment of Scripture.

- **1 Corinthians 2:6-16** However, we speak wisdom among those who are mature, yet not the wisdom of this age, nor of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing. <sup>7</sup> But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the ages for our glory, <sup>8</sup> which none of the rulers of this age knew; for had they known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. <sup>9</sup> But as it is written: "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, Nor

have entered into the heart of man The things which God has prepared for those who love Him." <sup>10</sup> But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God. <sup>11</sup> For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God. <sup>12</sup> Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God. <sup>13</sup> These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual. <sup>14</sup> But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. <sup>15</sup> But he who is spiritual judges all things, yet he himself is rightly judged by no one. <sup>16</sup> For "who has known the mind of the LORD that he may instruct Him?" But we have the mind of Christ.

The Revival Study Bible has a very interesting commentary on the above verses. I've never heard it explained in such a way, but it makes sense.

"Had the princes of this dark world's system known what would have resulted in the crucifixion of Jesus, they never would have crucified Him. This section of Scripture can be interpreted in a variety of ways, but in these verses Paul introduces one of the most controversial and most needed spiritual topics known to Christianity, and that is the subject of speaking in tongues. Throughout this passage, Paul emphasizes the importance of speaking words given and taught by the Holy Spirit as differing from the words of man's wisdom. He illustrates this concept by saying that we are to speak the hidden wisdom of God in words that reveal mysteries. He connects such a concept with 1 Corinthians 14:1-4, saying that the person who speaks in an unknown tongue speaks out the mysteries of God. Contextually, these words are given by the Holy Spirit so that we might know the things freely given to us of God and not be in ignorance like the world. Historical revivals are attended by manifestations of the Holy Spirit, such as speaking in tongues, and the need to be valued for the hidden plans of God that the revival may reveal."<sup>22</sup>

This generation of leaders and believers must stop its aimless patterns and enter heaven's command center where the Holy Spirit disseminates His hidden plans and purposes. The church is missing the full counsel of God on important matters today because leaders and believers are not praying in the Holy Spirit.

One final strategic value of praying in the Spirit is that it triggers the Spirit Himself to intercede. The Bible says that Jesus intercedes for us in heaven. In fact, the Word says, **"He always lives to make intercession for them,"** referring to those **"who come to God through Him."** (Heb. 7:25; Rom. 8:34). However, have you forgotten that the Holy Spirit also intercedes for us?

- **Romans 8:26-27 Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God.**

The immediate context of Romans 8 is one of the warring between flesh and Spirit, but there is strategic value for any context of spiritual warfare. Some may think that the above verses imply silence. However, they describe a praying that cannot be expressed

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<sup>22</sup> The Revival Study Bible, 2010 p. 1581.

in words; that is words common to man. In this sense, the Holy Spirit takes up the matter to help us because we don't know how to pray about it. The devil hates this level of intercession because He doesn't know what's being said and what's going forth is in the perfect will of God. Note how the praying rises above praying based on our understanding to a strategic level where the Holy Spirit engages in God's will. The church today often prays from their own understanding and perspective. The Holy Spirit prays and speaks when we deploy this lethal weapon of praying in the Spirit.

The last dominate weapon in God's armory that I want to discuss is the name of Jesus. Most do not view the name of Jesus in the context of spiritual warfare and strategic prayer, but this generation must understand that the name of Jesus is more than a name. It's the name above every name. It's the name that appears 980 times in the New Testament. It's the only name that will cause demons to flee. We often sing the chorus in church, *"Jesus, Jesus, You Make the Darkness Tremble."* Although the church acknowledges that salvation alone is in Jesus Christ, believers are dropping like flies, succumbing to cultural influences spearheaded by forces of darkness. The church today appears more like the sons of Sceva than the triumphant church of Jesus Christ.

- **Acts 19:11-20** Now God worked unusual miracles by the hands of Paul, <sup>12</sup> so that even handkerchiefs or aprons were brought from his body to the sick, and the diseases left them and the evil spirits went out of them. <sup>13</sup> Then some of the itinerant Jewish exorcists took it upon themselves to call the name of the Lord Jesus over those who had evil spirits, saying, "We exorcise you by the Jesus whom Paul preaches." <sup>14</sup> Also there were seven sons of Sceva, a Jewish chief priest, who did so. <sup>15</sup> And the evil spirit answered and said, "Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are you?" <sup>16</sup> Then the man in whom the evil spirit was leaped on them, overpowered them, and prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded. <sup>17</sup> This became known both to all Jews and Greeks dwelling in Ephesus; and fear fell on them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified. <sup>18</sup> And many who had believed came confessing and telling their deeds. <sup>19</sup> Also, many of those who had practiced magic brought their books together and burned them in the sight of all. And they counted up the value of them, and it totaled fifty thousand pieces of silver. <sup>20</sup> So the word of the Lord grew mightily and prevailed.

Ephesus would become a vital center of Christianity; however, it involved a fierce battle with demonic forces. It all begins with twelve followers of Jesus being filled with the Holy Spirit evidenced with tongues and prophesies. It's important to point out that Paul spent two years teaching the word of God to followers of Christ in response to great opposition to the message of Christ. He must have successfully engaged many evil spirits in the name of Jesus because others wanted to do the same. The only problem was that they were not quite convinced about the authority and power of Christ's name. Nor is there any indication, these Jewish exorcists, or the sons of Sceva, a Jewish priest, were Spirit Filled. As a result, the evil spirit admits it knows Jesus and Paul, ***"but who are you?"*** They appear to casually name the name as a formula rather than with faith in the powerful name of Jesus. If the name of Jesus is misused or improperly deployed, demon forces will have the same response today. In this case, the evil spirit overpowered them (brought them under its power) instead of the other way. I've talked to believers who are subdued by the enemy. They don't know how to get out of his annoying and oppressive influence. They don't know how to fight the enemy in most

cases. The name of Jesus is prevalent in strategic prayer and spiritual warfare. Here are a few prayer instructions:

1. We are to ask in His name:

**John 14:13-14 And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask anything in My name, I will do it. (John 14:13-14)**

2. We are to agree in His name:

**Matt. 18:19-20 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. For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them."**

3. We are to anoint the sick with oil in His name:

**James 5:14 Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing with oil in the name of the Lord.**

4. We are to cast out demons in His name:

**Luke 10:17 Then the seventy returned with joy saying "Lord, even the demons are subject to us in your name."**

5. We are to speak in new tongues, receive protection from deadly things, and lay hands on the sick in His name:

**Mark 16:17-18 And these signs will follow those who believe: In My name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues; they will take up serpents; and if they drink anything deadly, it will by no means hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover."**

6. We are to preach repentance and the remission of sins in His name:

**Luke 24:47 ...and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.**

I see much warfare in each of the above examples. And the context is one of prayer warfare. This generation needs to be harnessed to the authority and power in the name of Jesus. It's God's will for miracles to be performed in the name of Jesus (Heb. 2:4). The Early Church faced an onslaught of persecution and opposition from all sides. They fought against the forces of darkness. They overcame because they had undaunted faith in the name of Jesus. They regularly deployed His name against sickness, against demons, and anyone oppressed by the devil. Cities like Ephesus were delivered and transformed. Their prayers and active faith in the name of Jesus demonstrated they knew the strategic value of His name in every situation. Remember their warfare prayer in Acts 4 for God to extend His hand **"to heal, and that signs and wonders may be done through the name of Your holy Servant Jesus."** (Acts 4:30). I've observed churches singing about Jesus and speaking about Jesus, but not so much using the name of Jesus as a strategic weapon against demonic forces and structures. Churches and believers in general lose ground to the enemy when this is the case. Worldly cultures are influencing the church today more than any other period of history. This

new generation must reclaim the authority and power of the name of Jesus. Believers must learn how to harvest the power in His name to regain the strategic value against the forces of darkness.

I hope believers can regain any lost or diminished spiritual momentum in this teaching series. God's word declares we are ***"more than conquerors"*** in Christ (Rom. 8:37). This means (*hupernikao*) the victory surpasses everything. This generation must move forward in battle array fully deploying the weapons in God's armory. Nothing less will do!

## **Angelic Ministry**

Faith, the word of God, praying in the Spirit, and the name of Jesus are prominent level weapons in God's arsenal. These strategic weapons are deployed through believers in Christ; however, God also engages angelic troops to assist in specific battles. We see this in both the Old and New Testaments. Angelic ministry was very evident in the Early Church. There are around 200 references to individual angels and 92 references to a plurality of angels. I'm looking primarily in this session at the plurality of angels in the context of strategic prayer, intercession, and warfare. Although we see the archangels Michael and Gabriel, as well as individual angels appearing in both testaments, I want to focus our attention here on those situations where an angelic army or troops are deployed to assist in battle. Angels, according to God's word, exist to do His word.

- **Psalm 103:20-21 Bless the LORD, you His angels, Who excel in strength, who do His word, Heeding the voice of His word. <sup>21</sup> Bless the LORD, all you His hosts, You ministers of His, who do His pleasure.**

The New English Translation says, ***"Praise the LORD, you angels of his, you powerful warriors who carry out his decrees and obey his orders. Praise the LORD, all you warriors of his, you servants of his who carry out his desires."*** The words used in these two verses point to these beings as angelic warriors aligned with God's word and ready for battle. Angels are part of God's creation.

- **Psalm 104:4 Who makes His angels spirits, His ministers a flame of fire.**

Angels are ministering spirits to serve God and those who follow Christ. They are sent by God to assist us. He has created them. He sends them forth burning with the fire of the Holy Spirit.

- **Hebrews 1:14 Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation?**

Note again that angels are sent forth by God. They have an apostolic anointing and apostolic assignments. It's important to point out that angels are not to be worshiped by man. This is why believers need to understand their purpose, function, and position in God's kingdom. With the important ministry of angels comes an important warning:

- **Colossians 2:18-19 AMPC Let no one defraud you by acting as an umpire and declaring you unworthy and disqualifying you for the prize, insisting on self-abasement and worship of**

angels, taking his stand on visions [he claims] he has seen, vainly puffed up by his sensuous notions and inflated by his unspiritual thoughts and fleshly conceit, <sup>19</sup> And not holding fast to the Head, from Whom the entire body, supplied and knit together by means of its joints and ligaments, grows with a growth that is from God.

Have you ever encountered a believer who talks on and on about their spiritual experiences with angels or someone who speaks of a particular angel assigned exclusively to them? You feel like you need an angelic appearance to measure up. God's word is saying that such believers will rob you of victory because they've elevated angels beyond what the word of God says. Angels are there to assist, but never to be pridefully gloated over or worshipped. The ministry of angels must never be emphasized over the ministry of the Holy Spirit. Jesus Christ is exalted above angels. Scripture makes this very clear:

- **Hebrews 1:1-4** God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, <sup>2</sup> has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds; <sup>3</sup> who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, <sup>4</sup> having become so much better than the angels, as He has by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.

The book of Hebrews opens to us the biblical understanding of angels with convincing clarity.

1. No angel was ever told by God ***"You are My Son, Today I have begotten You"*** or ***"I will be to Him a Father, and He shall be to Me a Son."*** (Heb. 1:5).
2. Angels are commanded to worship the Son of God: ***"Let all the angels worship Him."*** (Heb. 1:6).
3. No angel is sovereign: ***"Who makes His angels spirits..."*** (Heb. 1:7)
4. No angels are enthroned in heaven, but Christ is and exercises an eternal reign: ***"Your throne, O God, is forever and ever..."*** (Heb. 1:8-9)
5. Angels are perishable, but not Christ: ***"They will perish, but You remain..."*** (Heb. 1:11-12; see also Jude 1:6)
6. No angel was ever told by God ***"Sit at My right hand, till I make Your enemies Your footstool."*** (Heb. 1:13).
7. Angels are not chosen to rule over the created world or the world to come: ***"He has not put the world to come...in subjection to angels."*** (Heb. 2:5-9).

In addition, angels don't know everything. They don't know the day and hour of Christ's return (See Matt. 24:36). Also, there are spiritual things revealed to us that angels would like to take a closer look at (See 1Pet. 1:12). Nevertheless, it's necessary to understand the greatness of Christ in comparison to angels because many have drifted away from what God's word says to be infatuated with angels and angelic portals. Another reason is that there's going to be an acceleration of angelic activity during the end times. There will be angels ascending and descending from heaven. This generation needs to be aware that angelic warriors will be sent by God to assist in spiritual battle.

Are angelic troops available to the church today? I believe they are. We need to ask the Lord for their help. Jesus turned down angelic assistance in lieu of the crucifixion.

- **Matthew 26:52-54** But Jesus said to him, "Put your sword in its place, for all who take the sword will perish by the sword. <sup>53</sup> "Or do you think that I cannot now pray to My Father, and He will provide Me with more than twelve legions of angels? <sup>54</sup> "How then could the Scriptures be fulfilled, that it must happen thus?"

Although differing in size at various times, a Roman legion during the time of Augustus consisted of roughly 6,826 men (6,100-foot soldiers; 726 horsemen). Therefore, 12 legions would have approximately 81,912 soldiers including 8,712 men on horseback. Note that Jesus and the heavenly saints are on horseback at the 2<sup>nd</sup> coming (Rev. 19). Also, Peter and the disciples wanted to fight against flesh and blood, but Jesus restrained them to fulfill the purpose of God's word. I'm thankful Jesus turned down 12 legions of angelic warriors to die on the cross for our sins. However, if Jesus could have asked for such assistance, can we do so today? I believe we can and should. Remember, Jesus taught His disciples if they ask anything in His name, He would do it. In addition, angels ministered to His needs in the wilderness following His face-to-face battle with Satan.

- **Mark 1:13** And He was there in the wilderness forty days, tempted by Satan, and was with the wild beasts; and the angels ministered to Him.

Now let's examine some biblical battles where this invisible angelic army is engaged on earth and in the heavenly realms to assist God's people.

The word of God makes it very clear that God fought for Israel. Although some may view this figuratively, I see it in a literal sense. Here are some examples of battles where Scripture says God fought on behalf of His people. A number of them involve angels. Angels are deployed by God in some but not all situations in response to strategic prayer. Although it is perfectly fine to request for angelic assistance, it is important to understand that the deployment of angels is up to God.

<b>Battle Description</b>	<b>Fight References</b>
<b>Exodus 14:1 – 15:21</b> Pharaoh pursues Israel at the Red Sea with 600 chariots & army; Israel cries to God & He commands them to go forward; God supernaturally separates the two armies overnight & fights for His people, parting the Sea & killing Pharaoh's army; Moses, Israel, and Miriam sing song of victory.	<b>Exodus 14:14</b> "The LORD will fight for you, and you shall hold your peace." <b>Exodus 14:19</b> And the Angel of God, who went before the camp of Israel, moved and went behind them; and the pillar of cloud went from before them and stood behind them. <b>Exodus 14:24</b> Now it came to pass, in the morning watch, that the LORD looked down upon the army of the Egyptians through the pillar of fire and cloud, and He troubled the army of the Egyptians.
<b>Exodus 19:8-16</b> Moses, Joshua, & Israel battle with the Amalekites; Moses prays & Joshua fights & God gave the victory; God reveals generational war with Amalek.	<b>Exodus 17:15</b> And Moses built an altar and called its name, The-LORD-Is-My-Banner; <sup>16</sup> for he said, "Because the LORD has sworn: the LORD <i>will have</i> war with Amalek from generation to generation."
<b>Deuteronomy 3:1-22</b> Moses rehearses with the people how they possessed the land according to God's commands & conquered King Og, the last remnant of the giants.	<b>Deuteronomy 3:21-22</b> "And I commanded Joshua at that time, saying, 'Your eyes have seen all that the LORD your God has done to these two kings; so will the LORD do to all the kingdoms through which you pass. <sup>22</sup> 'You must not fear

	them, for the LORD your God Himself fights for you.'
<b>Deuteronomy 20:1-20</b> Moses teaches principles governing warfare.	<b>Deuteronomy 20:3-4</b> "And he shall say to them, 'Hear, O Israel: Today you are on the verge of battle with your enemies. Do not let your heart faint, do not be afraid, and do not tremble or be terrified because of them; <sup>4</sup> 'for the LORD your God is He who goes with you, to fight for you against your enemies, to save you.'
<b>Joshua 10:1-27</b> Joshua leads war against 10 kings at Gibeon; God routs enemy with hailstones & the sun stood still.	<b>Joshua 10:14</b> And there has been no day like that, before it or after it, that the LORD heeded the voice of a man; for the LORD fought for Israel.
<b>Joshua 10:28-43</b> Joshua conquers the Southland in a string of battles; God delivered it into the hands of Israel	<b>Joshua 10:42</b> All these kings and their land Joshua took at one time, because the LORD God of Israel fought for Israel.
<b>Joshua 23:1-16</b> Joshua gives farewell address to Israel; states reason for their success in battle.	<b>Joshua 23:10</b> "One man of you shall chase a thousand, for the LORD your God is He who fights for you, as He promised you. <b>Joshua 23:3</b> "You have seen all that the LORD your God has done to all these nations because of you, for the LORD your God is He who has fought for you.
<b>Judges 4-5</b> Barak & Deborah team up to lead Israel into battle with King Jabin, Sisera, and the Canaanite army; greatly outnumbered; God routs the enemy; Sisera killed; Deborah and Barak sing a song together.	<b>Judges 5:20</b> They fought from the heavens; The stars from their courses fought against Sisera.
<b>2 Samuel 5:17-25; 2 Chronicles 14:8-17</b> David battles twice with the Philistines; David inquires of God; God breaks through in 1 <sup>st</sup> battle; idol gods burned in fire; God gives different instructions in 2 <sup>nd</sup> battle; wait to hear angelic army; David advances; God strikes before David & Philistines driven back.	<b>2 Samuel 5:20</b> So David went to Baal Perazim, and David defeated them there; and he said, "The LORD has broken through my enemies before me, like a breakthrough of water." Therefore he called the name of that place Baal Perazim. <b>2 Samuel 5:24</b> "And it shall be, when you hear the sound of marching in the tops of the mulberry trees, then you shall advance quickly. For then the LORD will go out before you to strike the camp of the Philistines."
<b>2 Kings 6:8 – 7:20</b> Syria battles against Israel; God gives Elisha secret information; King Ben-Hadad sends troops to arrest Elisha; Elisha prays; heavenly chariots seen; soldiers blinded by God; Syria attacks again; noise of heavenly army causes Syrians to flee leaving all valuables & food behind for four lepers and all Israel to gather.	<b>2 Kings 6:17</b> And Elisha prayed, and said, "LORD, I pray, open his eyes that he may see." Then the LORD opened the eyes of the young man, and he saw. And behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha. <b>2 Kings 7:6</b> For the Lord had caused the army of the Syrians to hear the noise of chariots and the noise of horses-- the noise of a great army; so they said to one another, "Look, the king of Israel has hired against us the kings of the Hittites and the kings of the Egyptians to attack us!"
<b>2 Chronicles 13:1-21</b> King Abijah of Judah & King Jeroboam of Israel set battle formation against each other over Davidic covenant; Judah had 100,000 army & Israel 800,000; Judah prays to God & He struck Israel.	<b>2 Chronicles 13:14-15</b> And when Judah looked around, to their surprise the battle line was at both front and rear; and they cried out to the LORD, and the priests sounded the trumpets. <sup>15</sup> Then the men of Judah gave a shout; and as the men of Judah shouted, it happened that God struck Jeroboam and all Israel before Abijah and Judah.
<b>2 Chronicles 20:1-30</b> People of Ammon, Moab, & others come to battle against Jehoshaphat and Judah; Judah seeks the Lord; Jahaziel prophesies; singers/praisers sent forth before army; God sets ambushes; enemy soldiers turn on each other & are defeated; Judah spends 3 days taking the spoils	<b>2 Chronicles 20:17</b> 'You will not need to fight in this battle. Position yourselves, stand still and see the salvation of the LORD, who is with you, O Judah and Jerusalem!' Do not fear or be dismayed; tomorrow go out against them, for the LORD is with you." <b>2 Chronicles 20:22</b> Now when they began to sing and to praise, the LORD set ambushes against the people of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir, who had come against

	<p>Judah; and they were defeated.</p> <p><b>2 Chronicles 20:29</b> And the fear of God was on all the kingdoms of <i>those</i> countries when they heard that the LORD had fought against the enemies of Israel.</p>
<p><b>2 Chronicles 32:1-23</b> King Sennacherib of Assyria makes war against Jerusalem; Hezekiah &amp; Isaiah pray to God who sends an angel to defeat Assyrian army who return in shame to their own land; many offer gifts to the Lord and to Hezekiah.</p>	<p><b>2 Chronicles 32:8</b> "With him is an arm of flesh; but with us is the LORD our God, to help us and to fight our battles." And the people were strengthened by the words of Hezekiah king of Judah.</p> <p><b>2 Chronicles 32:21</b> Then the LORD sent an angel who cut down every mighty man of valor, leader, and captain in the camp of the king of Assyria. So he returned shamefaced to his own land. And when he had gone into the temple of his god, some of his own offspring struck him down with the sword there. (See also 2Kgs 19:35; Isaiah 30:31-32; 37:36)</p>
<p><b>Nehemiah 4:1-23</b> Combined army of Arabs, Ammonites, and others conspire to attack Jerusalem; Nehemiah &amp; people pray to God; Nehemiah exhorts people and gives battle plan; God brings plot to nothing.</p>	<p><b>Nehemiah 4:20</b> "Wherever you hear the sound of the trumpet, rally to us there. Our God will fight for us."</p>
<p><b>Daniel 10:1-21</b> Daniel prays for 21 days before receiving heavenly messenger who helps him understand things; explains delay; strengthens Daniel and explains battle with demonic guardians over two nations.</p>	<p><b>Daniel 10:13</b> "But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me twenty-one days; and behold, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, for I had been left alone there with the kings of Persia.</p> <p><b>Daniel 10:20</b> Then he said, "Do you know why I have come to you? And now I must return to fight with the prince of Persia; and when I have gone forth, indeed the prince of Greece will come.</p>
<p><b>Zechariah 10:1-12</b> The prophet speaks of the restoration of Judah and Israel; outpouring of the Spirit; futility of idols; God will deal with leaders; He will restore warrior spirit; God will fight with them; pride of Assyria and Egypt will be brought down.</p>	<p><b>Zechariah 10:3</b> "My anger is kindled against the shepherds, And I will punish the goatherds. For the LORD of hosts will visit His flock, The house of Judah, And will make them as His royal horse in the battle.</p> <p><b>Zechariah 10:5</b> They shall be like mighty men, Who tread down <i>their enemies</i> In the mire of the streets in the battle. They shall fight because the LORD is with them, And the riders on horses shall be put to shame.</p>
<p><b>Zechariah 14:1-21</b> End time prophecy that the day of the Lord is coming; Christ will come with all His saints; God will battle against nations &amp; defeat those who fought against Jerusalem; the Lord is worshipped by the nations in the end.</p>	<p><b>Zechariah 14:3</b> Then the LORD will go forth And fight against those nations, As He fights in the day of battle.</p>
<p><b>Revelation 2:12-17</b> Jesus says He will fight against those who hold doctrines of Balaam and Nicolaitans; calls the church to repent.</p>	<p><b>Revelation 2:16</b> "Repent, or else I will come to you quickly and will fight against them with the sword of My mouth.</p>
<p><b>Revelation 12:1-17</b> Archangel Michael leads angelic army in heavenly war against the devil and his angels; Satan cast out; makes war against believers on earth; believers overcome</p>	<p><b>Revelation 12:7</b> And war broke out in heaven: Michael and his angels fought with the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought,</p> <p><b>Revelation 12:11</b> "And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death.</p>
<p><b>Revelation 17-20</b> Babylonian coalition wars against the Lamb of God; heavenly armies engaged; Babylon falls; heaven rejoices.</p>	<p><b>Revelation 17:14</b> "These will make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb will overcome them, for He is Lord of lords and King of kings; and those <i>who are</i> with Him are called, chosen, and faithful."</p> <p><b>Revelation 19:14</b> And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses.</p>

There's a common word used in the above examples. The Hebrew *lacham* (law-kham') simply means *to fight, do battle, or make war*. There's every indication that the Lord Himself supernaturally engaged in these specific battles. I already mentioned in some detail how the Commander of God's army came to assist Joshua to conquer Jericho so it's unnecessary to present that battle again. However, during the time of the judges, I discovered detailed evidence of angelic warriors in the battle with the Canaanite king, Jabin, and his army commander, Sisera. Sisera commanded a large army of 900 chariots and thousands upon thousands of soldiers. Israel was greatly outnumbered. Deborah was judging Israel at the time and Barak was leading Israel's troops. Although Barak was hesitant, Deborah prophesied:

- **Judges 4:14-15** Then Deborah said to Barak, "Up! For this is the day in which the LORD has delivered Sisera into your hand. Has not the LORD gone out before you?" So Barak went down from Mount Tabor with ten thousand men following him. <sup>15</sup> And the LORD routed Sisera and all his chariots and all his army with the edge of the sword before Barak;

The Hebrew perfect tense indicates a completed action from Deborah's perspective and the Lord's. The Lord speaks through her that the victory was a done deal even though the battle had not even taken place. But are angelic troops deployed? We get a glimpse of this in the fact that the Lord went out before the army and **"routed"** (*moved noisily to crush*) Sisera on the actual battlefield. Deborah's song reveals the truth about the angelic troops. She sings, **"The LORD came down for me against the mighty."** (Judg. 5:13b). Why did the Lord come down? There are several reasons, but Deborah says, **"They chose new gods; Then there was war in the gates; Not a shield or spear was seen among forty thousand in Israel."** (Judg. 5:8). Did an angelic army come to assist and assure victory?

- **Judges 5:19-23** "The kings came and fought, Then the kings of Canaan fought In Taanach, by the waters of Megiddo; They took no spoils of silver. <sup>20</sup> They fought from the heavens; The stars from their courses fought against Sisera. <sup>21</sup> The torrent of Kishon swept them away, That ancient torrent, the torrent of Kishon. O my soul, march on in strength! <sup>22</sup> Then the horses' hooves pounded, The galloping, galloping of his steeds. <sup>23</sup> 'Curse Meroz,' said the angel of the LORD, 'Curse its inhabitants bitterly, Because they did not come to the help of the LORD, To the help of the LORD against the mighty.'

Some scholars believe this means God assisted by sending a torrential rain during the battle, but this seems to limit His involvement. Occasionally, **"stars"** in Scripture refer to angels (Job 38:7; Rev. 1:20; 12:4, 9). An angel also spoke to those who did not come to help in the battle (v. 23). This is all convincing evidence that the heavenly army was engaged before, during, and after the battle. It's interesting to know that the name, *Sisera* means *"battle array."* He had everything in his advantage in the natural but was no match for the invisible angelic army of the LORD. It's also obvious that God commanded the troops to be deployed against Sisera.

The prophet Elisha is another example worthy to be examined. He had received a double portion anointing and his ministry confirmed this with many healings and miracles. There was a battle between Syria and Israel that draws special attention. Not only did Elisha have special revelation from God on the enemy's location and activities,

but he also had foreknowledge and access to a heavenly army more powerful than anything on earth. One morning Elisha and his servant found themselves surrounded by a very large Syrian army with many horses and chariots. "*What shall we do?*" his servant fearfully asked. Look at what Elisha says:

- **2 Kings 6:16-18** So he answered, "Do not fear, for those who are with us are more than those who are with them." <sup>17</sup> And Elisha prayed, and said, "LORD, I pray, open his eyes that he may see." Then the LORD opened the eyes of the young man, and he saw. And behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha. <sup>18</sup> So when the Syrians came down to him, Elisha prayed to the LORD, and said, "Strike this people, I pray, with blindness." And He struck them with blindness according to the word of Elisha.

It's evident that Elisha was praying at a strategic level. I see from this that it's not enough to be aware of Satan's attack plan. We must also be perceptive of God's angelic attack force. Does the church today have such awareness? Although Syrian raiders were temporarily stopped, King Ben Hadad of Syria got his army together and attacked Samaria in full force. It was in the time of a great famine. The King of Israel blamed the Lord and Elisha for this and wanted Elisha killed, but the one he sent to do the deed was stopped. Here's what happened.

- **2 Kings 6:32-33** But Elisha was sitting in his house, and the elders were sitting with him. And the king sent a man ahead of him, but before the messenger came to him, he said to the elders, "Do you see how this son of a murderer has sent someone to take away my head? Look, when the messenger comes, shut the door, and hold him fast at the door. Is not the sound of his master's feet behind him?" <sup>33</sup> And while he was still talking with them, there was the messenger, coming down to him; and then the king said, "Surely this calamity is from the LORD; why should I wait for the LORD any longer?"
- **2 Kings 7:1-2** Then Elisha said, "Hear the word of the LORD. Thus says the LORD: 'Tomorrow about this time a seah of fine flour shall be sold for a shekel, and two seahs of barley for a shekel, at the gate of Samaria.'" <sup>2</sup> So an officer on whose hand the king leaned answered the man of God and said, "Look, if the LORD would make windows in heaven, could this thing be?" And he said, "In fact, you shall see it with your eyes, but you shall not eat of it."

The King of Israel had some misperceptions about God and His prophet. In addition, his officer had no faith in God. Those who disbelieve God's ability to deliver in any situation will not see victory. However, just the noise of God's angelic attack force sent the enemy fleeing. Four desperate lepers were the first to behold the spoils of war.

- **2 Kings 7:3-7** Now there were four leprous men at the entrance of the gate; and they said to one another, "Why are we sitting here until we die?" <sup>4</sup> "If we say, 'We will enter the city,' the famine is in the city, and we shall die there. And if we sit here, we die also. Now therefore, come, let us surrender to the army of the Syrians. If they keep us alive, we shall live; and if they kill us, we shall only die." <sup>5</sup> And they rose at twilight to go to the camp of the Syrians; and when they had come to the outskirts of the Syrian camp, to their surprise no one was there. <sup>6</sup> For the Lord had caused the army of the Syrians to hear the noise of chariots and the noise of horses-- the noise of a great army; so they said to one another, "Look, the king of Israel has hired against us the kings of the Hittites and the kings of the Egyptians to

attack us!" <sup>7</sup> Therefore they arose and fled at twilight, and left the camp intact-- their tents, their horses, and their donkeys-- and they fled for their lives.

This reminds me of the New Testament admonition to "***Resist the devil and he will flee from you.***" (James 4:7). The unbelieving officer had a very dreadful day.

- 2 Kings 7:19 Then that officer had answered the man of God, and said, "Now look, if the LORD would make windows in heaven, could such a thing be?" And he had said, "In fact, you shall see it with your eyes, but you shall not eat of it." <sup>20</sup> And so it happened to him, for the people trampled him in the gate, and he died.

I believe this is a revealing picture that we have access through strategic prayer to a heavenly army of angels to assist in battle. This generation cannot overcome the world without faith in God's ability to fight for us and win battles. I pray for the Lord to open the eyes of this generation of leaders and believers!

## Rules of Engagement

What are rules of engagement? The following definition contains some interesting points and raise some relevant questions for the 21<sup>st</sup> century church:

"Rules of Engagement are rules or directives to military forces that define the circumstances conditions degree and manner in which force or actions which might be construed as provocative may be applied They provide authorization for and or limits on among other things the use of force and the employment of certain specific capabilities."<sup>23</sup>

What kind of directives would be helpful to the church in spiritual warfare and strategic level prayer? Is this generation ready to go to war against the forces of darkness? Is it willing to unite with biblical and heavenly instructions on the most effective use of force against the enemy? The level of warfare is determined by the scope of any battle. For example, there is no strategic value for a natural army to drop a nuclear warhead on one person. Every believer has the authority and power in the name of Jesus to heal the sick and cast out demons. Jesus cast out a legion of demons from one man (Mark 5:1-20), however, an individual believer would have great difficulty to single handedly defeat the entire demonic structure over a city or nation. That level of engagement takes the armies of God with a much higher level of intercession and warfare (see our training manual, *Spiritual Warfare*, for a simple review of casting out demons freely available on our website and mobile app). I like what *The New Spirit Filled Life Bible* says about this level of warfare:

*"Just as the angels have archangels and higher powers, the demons have what are called "principalities and powers." There is conflict in the invisible world between God's loyal messengers and demonic hosts. Somehow in God's wonderful order, He uses the prayers of His people as a restraint against demonic activity, inviting the presence of God to intervene in the course of human events (see Dan. 10)"*<sup>24</sup>

Strategic prayer invites God's presence in the form of His angelic army to fight for us. However, what are the Rules of Engagement (ROE) under the New Covenant? Here

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<sup>23</sup> <http://www.definitions.net/definition/Rules>. 8/24/17

<sup>24</sup> New Spirit Filled Life Bible, 2002 (p. 1357)

are ten ROE's that every soldier of Christ needs to know before entering into battle with the forces of darkness.

1. **Resist** – Greek *anthistemi* (anth-is'-tay-mee) Meaning: set oneself against, withstand, resist, oppose. (Note: 2<sup>nd</sup> person plural verb imperative implies group action)
  - James 4:7 Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.
  - 1 Peter 5:8-11 Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. <sup>9</sup> Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world. <sup>10</sup> But may the God of all grace, who called us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a while, perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle you. <sup>11</sup> To Him be the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.
2. **Pull/Cast down** – Greek *kathauresis/kathaireo* (kath-ah'-ee-res-is/kath-ahee-reh'-o) Meaning: take down, destroy, demolish, overthrow, take away power, bring to nothing. (Note: *kathaireo* – verb participle present active plural denoting group action)
  - 2 Corinthians 10:4-5 For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, <sup>5</sup> 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,
3. **Destroy** – Greek *katargeo* (kat-arg-eh'-o) Meaning: render idle, unemployed, inactive, inoperative, deprive of force, influence, power, bring to nothing, make of no effect.
  - Luke 4:34 saying, "Let us alone! What have we to do with You, Jesus of Nazareth? Did You come to destroy us? I know who You are-- the Holy One of God!"
  - 2 Thessalonians 2:8 And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming.
  - Hebrews 2:14 Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil,
  - 1 John 3:8 He who sins is of the devil, for the devil has sinned from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil.
4. **Overcome** – Greek *nikao* (nik-ah'-o) Meaning: conquer, be victorious, carry off the victory unharmed by the devices and assaults of the devil. (Note: the word is used repeatedly in Christ's message to the churches in Revelation 2-3)
  - John 16:33 "These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world."
  - Romans 8:37 Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us.
  - Romans 12:21 Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.
  - 1 John 2:13-14 I write to you, fathers, Because you have known Him who is from the beginning. I write to you, young men, Because you have overcome the wicked one. I write to you, little children, Because you have known the Father. <sup>14</sup> I have written to you, fathers, Because you have known Him who is from the beginning. I have written to you, young men, Because you are strong, and the word of God abides in you, And you have overcome the wicked one.
5. **Crush** – Greek *suntribo* (soon-tree'-bo) Meaning: break down in pieces, shatter one's strength, cause to shiver, put Satan under foot and as a conqueror trample all over him. (Note: the Greek *taxos* (soon) means speedily or quickly)
  - Romans 16:20 And the God of peace will crush Satan under your feet shortly. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen.
6. **Bind and Loose** – Greek *deo* (deh'-o) and *luo* (loo'-o) Meaning: bind, forbid, prohibit, declare to be illicit; loose, undo, dissolve anything bound, release from prison. (Note: the hostile battle between God and Satan)
  - Matthew 12:29 "Or how can one enter a strong man's house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man? And then he will plunder his house.
  - Matthew 16:19 "And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven."

- Luke 13:16 "So ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan has bound-- think of it-- for eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath?"
- 7. **Silence** – Greek *aphiemi* (af-ee'-ay-mee) Meaning: don't let, permit anything from saying or doing something in response. (Note: Jesus didn't need to hear anything from demons)
  - Mark 1:34 Then He healed many who were sick with various diseases, and cast out many demons; and He did not allow the demons to speak, because they knew Him.
  - Luke 4:41 And demons also came out of many, crying out and saying, "You are the Christ, the Son of God!" And He, rebuking them, did not allow them to speak, for they knew that He was the Christ.
- 8. **Rebuke** – Greek *epitimao* (ep-ee-tee-mah'-o) Meaning: tax with fault, chide, restrain against, censure severely to curb Satan's ferocity or violence.
  - Matthew 17:18 And Jesus rebuked the demon, and it came out of him; and the child was cured from that very hour.
  - Luke 4:39 So He stood over her and rebuked the fever, and it left her. And immediately she arose and served them.
  - Luke 8:24 And they came to Him and awoke Him, saying, "Master, Master, we are perishing!" Then He arose and rebuked the wind and the raging of the water. And they ceased, and there was a calm.
- 9. **Command** – Greek *epitasso* (ep-ee-tas'-so) Meaning: absolutely order, charge, command. (Note: Greek *paraggello* (par-ang-gel'-lo) means to give an order, charge. (Note: sends a clear message to the devil))
  - Mark 9:25 When Jesus saw that the people came running together, He rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it, "Deaf and dumb spirit, I command you, come out of him and enter him no more!"
  - Luke 8:29 For He had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man. For it had often seized him, and he was kept under guard, bound with chains and shackles; and he broke the bonds and was driven by the demon into the wilderness
  - Acts 16:18 And this she did for many days. But Paul, greatly annoyed, turned and said to the spirit, "I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her." And he came out that very hour.
- 10. **Cast out** – Greek *ekballo* (ek-bal'-lo) Meaning: send away, drive out. (Note: the picture is of Satan being overrun)
  - Matthew 8:16 When evening had come, they brought to Him many who were demon-possessed. And He cast out the spirits with a word, and healed all who were sick,
  - Matthew 12:28 "But if I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, surely the kingdom of God has come upon you.
  - Mark 16:17 "And these signs will follow those who believe: In My name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues;

The above Rules of Engagement present an unlimited force against demons and evil networks in the world. Are there any limitations to the use of force against demonic spirits and structures? I found one instance in the New Testament when calling upon heavenly forces was restrained by the Lord. This was when James and John asked Jesus for permission to command fire upon a Samaritan village that had rejected Him.

- Luke 9:51 Now it came to pass, when the time had come for Him to be received up, that He steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem, <sup>52</sup> and sent messengers before His face. And as they went, they entered a village of the Samaritans, to prepare for Him. <sup>53</sup> But they did not receive Him, because His face was set for the journey to Jerusalem. <sup>54</sup> And when His disciples James and John saw this, they said, "Lord, do You want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them, just as Elijah did?" <sup>55</sup> But He turned and rebuked them, and said, "You do not know what manner of spirit you are of. <sup>56</sup> "For the Son of Man did not come to destroy men's lives but to save them." And they went to another village.

Did you notice the restraint Jesus placed upon them regarding the use of force? This is an example of the improper use of force against people and places rather than against the demonic strongholds. Although it's biblical to warn people and nations of impending judgment if they don't repent and turn to God, it must be done in a spirit of intercession that represents the heart of God for the salvation of mankind. Jesus instructed the Twelve and the Seventy on the proper response to villages or cities that will not receive them.

- **Luke 10:10-16 "But whatever city you enter, and they do not receive you, go out into its streets and say, <sup>11</sup> 'The very dust of your city which clings to us we wipe off against you. Nevertheless know this, that the kingdom of God has come near you.' <sup>12</sup> "But I say to you that it will be more tolerable in that Day for Sodom than for that city. <sup>13</sup> "Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago, sitting in sackcloth and ashes. <sup>14</sup> "But it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the judgment than for you. <sup>15</sup> "And you, Capernaum, who are exalted to heaven, will be brought down to Hades. <sup>16</sup> "He who hears you hears Me, he who rejects you rejects Me, and he who rejects Me rejects Him who sent Me."**

The church needs to be in the right spirit when engaging in spiritual warfare and strategic level prayer. Once the Rules of Engagement are understood, believers in any place can gather to prepare for battle against the enemy. I believe the church today is in a fierce battle with demonic networks in every city, region, and nation. I don't think the church is in proper battle formation to effectively take on evil networks like the demonic princes of Persia, or Greece, or Babylon. The prophets present valuable instructions on how the church is to proceed against these commanders of darkness. God is raising up a remnant mission force who will actively engage in much higher levels of strategic prayer and warfare. God's armory is open! And the weapons of our warfare are mighty in God!

# Teaching Series #3: Strategic Patterns

## Charash Warriors

Bishop James Murunga of Kenya is one of the most effective spiritual leaders and prophetic intercessors I have the privilege of working with in this century. God has used him to mobilize and engage leaders and believers in strategic prayer against demonic strongholds in many spheres of influence. This includes the governmental level both in East Africa and the United States. I've personally sat under many of his teachings, and we have also served together on numerous 5-Fold Global equipping teams. God has blessed him with a spiritual ability to see by the Spirit of God strategic patterns of intercession and engagement by the church against fortified demonic positions in cities and regions. I've seen God's Kingdom advance through the church in these places. The first thing Bishop James does is lay down a foundation for strategic prayer. He does this by calling forth and training a team of *charash* warriors. Who are these spiritual warriors? How do they fit into strategic patterns revealed by heavenly counsel? For the answer, we must go to a revelatory teaching by Bishop James from the prophet Zechariah.

Zechariah prophesied during the time of Israel's return from Babylonian captivity under the policies of the Persian King Cyrus. It's important to mention that the specific policy was brought about by heavenly counsel where God anointed a secular king to accomplish His restorative plan for His people. Zechariah had a series of eight visions. The following chart identifies each vision and its importance.<sup>25</sup>

Vision	Significance
Man and horses among the myrtle trees (1:8)	The Lord will again be merciful to Jerusalem (1:14, 16, 17).
Four horns, four craftsmen (1:18-20)	Those who scattered Judah are cast out (1:21)
Man with measuring line (2:1)	God will be a protective wall of fire around Jerusalem (2:3-5).
Cleansing of Joshua (3:4)	The Servant, the Branch, comes to save (3:8, 9).
Golden lampstand and olive trees (4:2, 3)	The Lord empowers Israel by His Spirit (4:6).
The Flying Scroll (5:1)	Dishonesty is cursed (5:3)
Woman in the basket (5:6, 7)	Wickedness will be removed (5:8, 9).
Four chariots (6:1)	The spirits of heaven execute judgment on the whole Earth (6:5, 7).

Although these visions applied to the historical events of the day, they also have significant meaning and application for the church of this generation. One of them reveals the identity of *charash* warriors.

- Zechariah 1:18 Then I raised my eyes and looked, and there were four horns. <sup>19</sup> And I said to the angel who talked with me, "What are these?" So he answered me, "These are the horns that have scattered Judah, Israel, and Jerusalem." <sup>20</sup> Then the LORD showed me four craftsmen. <sup>21</sup> And I said, "What are these coming to do?" So he said, "These are the horns

<sup>25</sup> New Spirit Filled Life Bible, 2002 (p. 1250)

**that scattered Judah, so that no one could lift up his head; but the craftsmen are coming to terrify them, to cast out the horns of the nations that lifted up their horn against the land of Judah to scatter it."**

This vision was one of Zechariah's earlier visions. I noticed he was a young man when he had the vision because the angel sent to him in the vision that followed was commanded by another angel to **"Run, speak to this young man..."** (Zech. 2:3-4). I believe this says God will speak strategically to each young generation. There are many things to examine in this one vision of four horns and four craftsmen. Bishop James captures some of the key issues in this important vision.

### **Key Issues**

1. Horns of oppression that are designed to scatter and dominate
2. Targets are Judah, Israel and Jerusalem. Prophetically Judah means Praise, Israel represents God's Covenant with His people and Jerusalem signifies God's Ruling Place.
3. The carpenters signify skilled warriors with ability to dehorn forces of darkness that seek to scatter and oppress God's people

### **Application**

- As God's covenant people we are to be a praise hub on earth and allow His praises to reign. He desires to rule and reign in and through us. The enemy knows and seeks to oppress and disorient us lest our full potential in God is displayed.
- God's agenda is to equip us with skill that will, by the help of His Holy Spirit, dethrone powers of darkness so that our purpose on earth can fully be established.
- May we rise up this day and be what God wants us to be so that we can pull down forces of darkness assigned against our lives, marriages, children, our economies, and our spheres of daily lives. May we be the skilled warriors going forth in the power of His Spirit. May forgiveness come from our hearts to those that have caused offenses against us so that His forgiveness can impact our hearts and lives.

The key issues listed above are of great significance to the church today. You should not find it too surprising that what is spoken in this vision is in a military context. In fact, a **"horn"** is a common biblical metaphor for military power. The horn of an animal is used to attack and defend. David declares the Lord God as his shield and horn of salvation.

- **2 Samuel 22:3 The God of my strength, in whom I will trust; My shield and the horn of my salvation, My stronghold and my refuge; My Savior, You save me from violence.**

There are also clear warnings in Scripture against the horns of oppression with God's promise to victoriously lift the horn of His anointed ones.

- **Psalm 75:4-5 'I said to the boastful, 'Do not deal boastfully,' And to the wicked, 'Do not lift up the horn. <sup>5</sup> Do not lift up your horn on high; Do not speak with a stiff neck.'**
- **1 Samuel 2:10 The adversaries of the LORD shall be broken in pieces; From heaven He will thunder against them. The LORD will judge the ends of the earth. "He will give strength to His king, And exalt the horn of His anointed."**

- Psalm 148:14 And He has exalted the horn of His people, The praise of all His saints-- Of the children of Israel, A people near to Him. Praise the LORD!

God also promises to make the horn of His people like a horn of iron to deliver them from the power of the enemy.

- Micah 4:13 NIV "Rise and thresh, Daughter Zion, for I will give you horns of iron; I will give you hooves of bronze, and you will break to pieces many nations." You will devote their ill-gotten gains to the LORD, their wealth to the Lord of all the earth.

I found it most revealing that the very next verse of the above prophecy calls God's people to **"Now gather yourself in troops"** and is immediately followed by the promise of Christ's birth in Bethlehem (Micah 5:1-2). Furthermore, it's most edifying to find this all connected when Zacharias, who was filled with the Holy Spirit, prophesied saying:

- Luke 1:68-75 "Blessed is the Lord God of Israel, For He has visited and redeemed His people,<sup>69</sup> And has raised up a horn of salvation for us In the house of His servant David,<sup>70</sup> As He spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets, Who have been since the world began,<sup>71</sup> That we should be saved from our enemies And from the hand of all who hate us,<sup>72</sup> To perform the mercy promised to our fathers And to remember His holy covenant,<sup>73</sup> The oath which He swore to our father Abraham:<sup>74</sup> To grant us that we, Being delivered from the hand of our enemies, Might serve Him without fear,<sup>75</sup> In holiness and righteousness before Him all the days of our life.

The church is a constant target in the world today. The horns of oppression from evil rulers and principalities seek to oppress and destroy God's people. I found this description of the horns Zechariah saw to be very accurate:

"We have here the enemies of the church bold and daring, and threatening to be its death, to *cut off the name of Israel*; such the people of God had lately been insulted by: *I looked and behold four horns* ([v. 18](#)), which are explained [v. 19](#). They are the horns which have scattered Judah, Israel, and Jerusalem, that is, the Jews both in the country and in the city, because they were the Israel of God. They have *tossed them* (so some read it), as furious bulls with their horns toss that which they are enraged at. They have scattered them, *so that no man did lift up his head*, [v. 21](#). No man durst show his face for fear of them, much less give them any opposition, or make head against them. They are *horns*, denoting their dignity and dominion-*horns exalted*, denoting also their strength, and power, and violence. They are *four horns*, for the Jews are surrounded with them on every side; when they avoid one horn that pushes at them they run upon another. Note, the church's enemies have horns, and use them to the hindrance of every good work. The great enemy of the New Testament church has *seven heads and ten horns* ([Rev. xvii. 3](#)), so that those who endeavor to do the church any service must expect to be pushed at."<sup>26</sup>

The spirit of Babylon is fueled with the spirit of antichrist. There's the sound of battle in the land. What to do? What to do? Here's where the **"four craftsmen"** come in. The four opposing horns will be no match for the powerful craftsmen who will come to **"terrify"** them (Hebrew *charad* (khaw-rad') cause to *tremble, quake, move about, be afraid, startled*). Look closely at the following comparison between these two opposing forces.

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<sup>26</sup> BibleWorks9 (2011) Matthew Henry, Commentary on Zec 1:18.

Four Horns of Oppression	Four Craftsmen of Deliverance
<i>scattered Judah, Israel, and Jerusalem</i>	<i>coming to terrify them</i>
<i>scattered Judah, so that no one could lift up his head</i>	<i>cast out the horns of the nations</i>
<i>lifted up their horn against the land of Judah to scatter it.</i>	<i>cast out the horns of the nations</i>

There's a strategic pattern as these forces gather on the battlefield. On the one hand, the horns seek to scatter or disperse the church to a degree that she cannot mobilize a unified army of skilled spiritual warriors to effectively engage the enemy. The horns of oppression then can boast that the church is under its rule and incapable of rising to the summit. On the other hand, the craftsmen (Hebrew *charash* (khaw-rawsh') are chosen to move them out of the way and cast them out (Hebrew *yadah* (yaw-daw') to *throw, shoot, cast*). *Charash* is a Hebrew term that has several English translations such as carpenter, artisan, metalworker, armorer, or blacksmith. It is rendered as "**blacksmith**" in Isaiah 54. Nevertheless, the battle is clearly with those who come against God's people.

- **Isaiah 54:14 In righteousness you shall be established; You shall be far from oppression, for you shall not fear; And from terror, for it shall not come near you. <sup>15</sup> Indeed they shall surely assemble, but not because of Me. Whoever assembles against you shall fall for your sake. <sup>16</sup> "Behold, I have created the blacksmith Who blows the coals in the fire, Who brings forth an instrument for his work; And I have created the spoiler to destroy. <sup>17</sup> 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, And their righteousness is from Me," Says the LORD.**

What does the above picture say to the church? The NET Bible notes have a great illustration of a blacksmith (*charash*) in battle with the horns of oppression:

"The horns are perhaps made of iron, the strongest of all metals known to the ancient Near Eastern world, since military activity is implied in the context. Only *blacksmiths* can cut the horns off. If the horns represent oppressive nations, the blacksmiths must represent deliverers whom the LORD raises up."<sup>27</sup>

I also recall a message another 5-Fold Global partner, Evangelist Dr. Joram Dol of India, preached in East Africa on the blacksmith from Isaiah 54:16. He explained how a useless instrument now becomes very important.

"Many say I am useless. I don't know how to preach. I'm hopeless. Useless. If you feel that way, the Holy Spirit is coming to you. He will pick you up! He's coming here to pick us up. We are a powerful weapon in His hands! Have you ever had a touch from this blacksmith? The hammer is nothing more than the word of God (Jer. 23:29). The hammer comes close and starts to hit us. If anyone be in Christ he is a new creature. This is by the word of God. This is what I see in churches: Praise and dancing and then when it comes to the Word, there is sleepy. We are losing the word of God! There is power in the word of God. There is life in the word of God. The blacksmith will make your light shine. The only thing you can do is go to the blacksmith right now! Bless God for the fire. Our God is a burning fire. Our God is a consuming fire. The fire

<sup>27</sup> BibleWorks9 (2011) NET Bible Zec 1:20 note 29.

refines us. The blacksmith will put you in the fire. Finally, is the instrument; a useful instrument in the hand of God." <sup>28</sup>

Regardless of the translation, these are very skilled and anointed people like the artisans chosen by God to do specialized work on the tabernacle (Exodus 31:1-6; 35:10, 35). They are spiritually tested warriors when it comes to strategic prayer against demonic forces over people and nations. They're warriors in tune with the Master Intercessor. They're engaged at the strategic levels of intercession. I discovered some remarkable things when I took a closer look at these verses that specifically mention intercession:

- **Isaiah 53:12** Therefore I will divide Him a portion with the great, And He shall divide the spoil with the strong, Because He poured out His soul unto death, And He was numbered with the transgressors, And He bore the sin of many, And made intercession for the transgressors.
- **Isaiah 59:16** He saw that there was no man, And wondered that there was no intercessor; Therefore His own arm brought salvation for Him; And His own righteousness, it sustained Him.
- **Romans 8:26-27** Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. <sup>27</sup> Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God.
- **Romans 8:34** Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us.
- **Hebrews 7:25** Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.
- **1 Timothy 2:1** Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men,

The military imagery in the first two lines of Isaiah 53:12 depicts Christ, The Servant, as a warrior who will be enormously rewarded for His effort and triumph in battle. He will share ***“the spoil with the strong.”*** Multitudes will follow Him in the victory because He laid down His life for them on the battlefield. The Hebrew *paga* (paw-gah') emphasizes the intensity of this battle. The NET Bible notes confirm this:

“The Hiphil of *פָּגַע* (*paga*) can mean “cause to attack” (v. [Isa 53:6](#)), “urge, plead verbally” ([Jer 15:11](#); [Jer 36:25](#)), or “intervene militarily” ([Isa 59:16](#)). Perhaps the third nuance fits best here, for military imagery is employed in the first two lines of the verse.”<sup>29</sup>

Just think about this for a moment. Christ, the Suffering Servant and Mighty Warrior, is militant in intercession for those who rebel or revolt against God. Romans 8 reveals that the Holy Spirit does the same through us. I discovered a much higher level of intercession in Romans 8:26-27 than in the other New Testament passages. Take a look at this:

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<sup>28</sup> Evangelist Dr. Joram Dol. *The Blacksmith*. Message delivered at Grace Community Fellowship, Bungoma, Kenya. 11/27/17.

<sup>29</sup> BibleWorks9 (2011) NET Bible Isa 53:12 note 37.

## Romans 8:26

*huperentugchano* (hoop-er-en-toong-khan'-o) – to stand out in intercession, rise above, overtop, be above, superior in rank, authority, power, to excel better than.

## Romans 8:27

*entugchano* (en-toong-khan'-o) – to light upon a person or thing, fall in with, hit upon, to go to or meet a person for the purpose of conversation, consultation, or supplication.

Not only does this describe the *“huper”* intercession of Jesus and the Holy Spirit, but the higher-level intercession of *charash* warriors. The result of the militant and strategic prayer is a victory on the battlefield for multitudes in the valley of decision. Those who follow Christ are **“more than conquerors”** with Him.

What’s it going to take to bring a nation back to the Lord? To say, **“to the prisoners, ‘Go forth,’ to those who are in darkness, ‘Show yourselves.’”** (Isaiah 49:9-10). To begin with, it will take skilled prayer warriors; intercessors who will not back down but fight to restore a nation. Many in the church may be subdued and ready to give up, but listen to these words of Isaiah:

- Isaiah 49:1-6 "Listen, O coastlands, to Me, And take heed, you peoples from afar! The LORD has called Me from the womb; From the matrix of My mother He has made mention of My name. <sup>2</sup> And He has made My mouth like a sharp sword; In the shadow of His hand He has hidden Me, And made Me a polished shaft; In His quiver He has hidden Me." <sup>3</sup> "And He said to me, 'You are My servant, O Israel, In whom I will be glorified.' <sup>4</sup> Then I said, 'I have labored in vain, I have spent my strength for nothing and in vain; Yet surely my just reward is with the LORD, And my work with my God.'" <sup>5</sup> "And now the LORD says, Who formed Me from the womb to be His Servant, To bring Jacob back to Him, So that Israel is gathered to Him (For I shall be glorious in the eyes of the LORD, And My God shall be My strength), <sup>6</sup> Indeed He says, 'It is too small a thing that You should be My Servant To raise up the tribes of Jacob, And to restore the preserved ones of Israel; I will also give You as a light to the Gentiles, That You should be My salvation to the ends of the earth.'"

These prophetic words are quite significant for the church because it’s a message to Gentiles. What does it mean to be a **“polished staff”** in the hands of the Lord? The Hebrew *barar* (baw-rar') means *purge, purify, choose, cleanse or make bright or shining*. This describes the servant as the **“polished”** shaft of an arrow. And take special notice that these chosen and cleansed arrows are in **“His quiver.”** God’s servant is like an arrow in God’s quiver. I like what the NET Bible says about this:

“The figurative language emphasizes the servant's importance as the Lord's effective instrument. The servant's mouth, which stands metonymically for his words, is compared to a sharp sword because he will be an effective spokesman on God's behalf (see [Isa 50:4](#)). The Lord holds his hand on the servant, ready to draw and use him at the appropriate time. The servant is like a sharpened arrow reserved in a quiver for just the right moment.”<sup>30</sup>

There’s a clear message to the church of this generation. This is the right moment to engage the forces of darkness. Remember, this is all in the context of strategic prayer and warfare. Matthew Henry’s Commentary also views this spiritual battle.

<sup>30</sup> BibleWorks9 (2011) NET Bible Zec 1:20 note 29.

"God had fitted and qualified him for the service to which he designed him. He *made his mouth like a sharp sword*, and *made him like a polished shaft*, or a bright arrow, furnished him with every thing necessary to fight God's battles against the powers of darkness, to conquer Satan, and bring back God's revolted subjects to their allegiance, by his word: that is the *two-edged sword* ([Heb. iv. 12](#)) which comes out of his mouth, [Rev. xix. 15](#). The convictions of the word are the arrows that shall be sharp in the hearts of sinners, [Ps. xlv. 5](#). 3. God had preferred him to the service for which he had reserved him: *He has hidden me in the shadow of his hand* and in his quiver."<sup>31</sup>

Although this *Servant Song* from Isaiah is speaking of Christ, it presents a strategic pattern of how *charash* warriors are chosen and equipped for strategic use in God's plan of Kingdom Advancement against dark forces in the world. Don't be alarmed if most of these skilled warriors are women. I discovered in God's word that this was according to His plan. Both Isaiah and Jeremiah confirm this:

- **Isaiah 32:9-15** Rise up, you women who are at ease, Hear my voice; You complacent daughters, Give ear to my speech. <sup>10</sup> In a year and some days You will be troubled, you complacent women; For the vintage will fail, The gathering will not come. <sup>11</sup> Tremble, you women who are at ease; Be troubled, you complacent ones; Strip yourselves, make yourselves bare, And gird sackcloth on your waists. <sup>12</sup> People shall mourn upon their breasts For the pleasant fields, for the fruitful vine. <sup>13</sup> On the land of my people will come up thorns and briers, Yes, on all the happy homes in the joyous city; <sup>14</sup> Because the palaces will be forsaken, The bustling city will be deserted. The forts and towers will become lairs forever, A joy of wild donkeys, a pasture of flocks-- <sup>15</sup> Until the Spirit is poured upon us from on high, And the wilderness becomes a fruitful field, And the fruitful field is counted as a forest.
- **Jeremiah 9:17-24** Thus says the LORD of hosts: "Consider and call for the mourning women, That they may come; And send for skillful wailing women, That they may come. <sup>18</sup> Let them make haste And take up a wailing for us, That our eyes may run with tears, And our eyelids gush with water. <sup>19</sup> For a voice of wailing is heard from Zion: 'How we are plundered! We are greatly ashamed, Because we have forsaken the land, Because we have been cast out of our dwellings.'" <sup>20</sup> Yet hear the word of the LORD, O women, And let your ear receive the word of His mouth; Teach your daughters wailing, And everyone her neighbor a lamentation. <sup>21</sup> For death has come through our windows, Has entered our palaces, To kill off the children-- no longer to be outside! And the young men-- no longer on the streets! <sup>22</sup> Speak, "Thus says the LORD: 'Even the carcasses of men shall fall as refuse on the open field, Like cuttings after the harvester, And no one shall gather them.'" <sup>23</sup> Thus says the LORD: "Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, Let not the mighty man glory in his might, Nor let the rich man glory in his riches; <sup>24</sup> But let him who glories glory in this, That he understands and knows Me, That I am the LORD, exercising lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth. For in these I delight," says the LORD. (See Acts 16:13)

I've observed that many pastors do not have the gift of intercession, but many women do! Note how these women are to engage in strategic prayer and teach their daughters how to pray until heaven is opened and "***the Spirit is poured upon us***," until people know the Lord. Male pastors tend to be threatened by this; however, it's time to get

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<sup>31</sup> BibleWorks9 (2011) Matthew Henry, Commentary on Isa 49:2.

over it! God, **“The LORD of hosts,”** is calling the women of the church to strategic prayer to roll back clouds of darkness. Gather, train, and release them according to the strategic pattern of God’s Word!

This generation needs to be taught how to pray and pray strategically! I’m surprised just how many churches lack effective prayer teams. And the *charash* warriors who are present are hidden. Often the problem is with pastors who have no vision for strategic prayer beyond their primary mission to build their own ministries. I’ve seen in God’s word those battles are not won without strategic prayer. Therefore, I firmly believe a *charash* team needs to be gathered, trained, and engaged by the church in every place. 5-Fold Global leaders like Bishop James Murunga are doing this with impressive results. For example, he launched the *Charash Equipping Center* in August 2021 in Kenya to train and activate remnant believers in strategic level ministry, prayer, and warfare for advanced level prayer engagements. God is pleased and glorified by this.

## **The Royal Battle Horse**

The introduction of Judah as an end time **“royal horse in the battle,”** is one of the remarkable transformations recorded in God’s word. The prophet Zechariah says this about it:

- **Zechariah 10:3-5 AMPC** My anger is kindled against the shepherds [who are not true shepherds] and I will punish the goat leaders, for the Lord of hosts has visited His flock, the house of Judah, and will make them as His beautiful and majestic horse in the battle. [Ezek. 34:1-10.] 4 Out of him [Judah] shall come forth the Cornerstone, out of him the tent peg, out of him the battle bow; every ruler shall proceed from him. [Jer. 30:21.] 5 And they shall be like mighty men treading down their enemies in the mire of the streets in the battle, and they shall fight because the Lord is with them, and the [oppressor's] riders on horses shall be confounded and put to shame.

Is it possible that the Lord is also upset with this generation of church leaders? I believe we need to face the possibility. This is not something anyone wants to consider because it’s contrary to what many have been taught. However, if leaders are filled with pride and the like, the Word says He, the Lord Himself, will be against them.

- **James 4:6-7 AMPC** But He gives us more and more grace (power of the Holy Spirit, to meet this evil tendency and all others fully). That is why He says, God sets Himself against the proud and haughty, but gives grace [continually] to the lowly (those who are humble enough to receive it). [Prov. 3:34.] 7 So be subject to God. Resist the devil [stand firm against him], and he will flee from you.
- **1 Peter 5:5 AMPC** Likewise, you who are younger and of lesser rank, be subject to the elders (the ministers and spiritual guides of the church)–[giving them due respect and yielding to their counsel]. Clothe (apron) yourselves, all of you, with humility [as the garb of a servant, so that its covering cannot possibly be stripped from you, with freedom from pride and arrogance] toward one another. For God sets Himself against the proud (the insolent, the overbearing, the disdainful, the presumptuous, the boastful) – (and He opposes, frustrates, and defeats them], but gives grace (favor, blessing) to the humble. [Prov. 3:34.]

Although the Lord may not be pleased with church leaders today, He supplies even more grace to turn them around so they can successfully engage the devil in battle. The LORD of the heavenly armies comes to change things. I was surprised to learn that the Early Church Fathers write extensively about the role of bishops with many admonitions and rules, but nothing about the transformation of the church into an end time war horse. This generation is in danger of overlooking this strategic transformational pattern. And it begins with strategic prayer.

- **Zechariah 10:1-2 Ask the LORD for rain In the time of the latter rain. The LORD will make flashing clouds; He will give them showers of rain, Grass in the field for everyone. <sup>2</sup> For the idols speak delusion; The diviners envision lies, And tell false dreams; They comfort in vain. Therefore the people wend their way like sheep; They are in trouble because there is no shepherd.**

The church is surrounded by forces of darkness on all sides. There will be no letting up. This generation needs the latter rain of the Holy Spirit. The first strategic prayer of the Early Church was for the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:4-8, 14; 2:4). Church leaders who don't lead the people in praying for the Holy Spirit are cheating them out of this remarkable transformation from vulnerable, defeated, sheepish people into a royal war horse ready for battle. There's a dramatic change from weakness to strength. It's like the Psalm says, **"They go from strength to strength."** (Psalm 84:7). The Hebrew *howd* (hode) refers to *majesty, dignity, splendor, vigor, and authority*. God is saying He will make them like a vigorous horse of His majesty in battle. There's also the notion of a *"majestic snorting"* of this war horse that *"is a terror"* to the enemy in battle.<sup>32</sup> The end time scene of Jesus in all His victorious majesty seated on a white horse and the saints of heaven following Him on white horses confirms this transformation for the church. The horse also is a *"swift"* one. The church appears to camp out at one place, but when we are transformed into this majestic war horse, the word of God moves swiftly against the enemy (Psalm 147:15; 2Thess 3:1).

Is this generation of Christ followers moving toward becoming Christ's royal war horse in battle against evil? God promises to do this and now's the time. Look at these four messianic metaphors from the prophet Zechariah (Zech. 10:4-5):

1. **The Cornerstone** – Christ would be their foundation (Psalm 118:22; Isaiah 28:16; Matt. 21:42; Mark 12:10; Luke 20:17; Acts 4:11; Eph. 2:20; 1Pet. 2:6-8)
2. **The Tent Peg** – Christ would be their support and security (Isaiah 22:22-23).
3. **The Battle Bow** – Christ would bring the victory against the enemy (2Cor. 2:14).
4. **Every ruler together** – Christ will lead and rule as Warrior-King (Rev. 19:11-16)

The prophet says they will fight in battle because **"the LORD is with them."** I believe Jesus Christ, the Cornerstone and Head of the church, is about to strengthen and empower His remnant church anew. He's *whistling* (Zech. 10:8) to this generation, inviting them to return to God. He's driven by His mercy and compassion for His people. It's time for the church to move from the *"wimpy"* and complacent side to the *"warrior"* side. This involves a big transformation, but one that must take place. The church must always be reminded from beginning to end: The victory is the Lord's!

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<sup>32</sup> BibleWorks9 (2011) Brown, Driver, Briggs, Hebrew and English Lexicon (Unabridged) 2305.

- Proverbs 21:31 NLT The horse is prepared for the day of battle, but the victory belongs to the LORD.

## Battle Formation

There are many times in Scripture where God's people go forth in battle formation. Is there a strategic pattern or order by which the church as a spiritual army is to operate? What can we learn from the battle formations in God's word? Let's first look at David's growing army. This earthly army is compared with the Lord's army.

- 1 Chronicles 12:22-23 For at that time they came to David day by day to help him, until it was a great army, like the army of God. <sup>23</sup> Now these were the numbers of the divisions that were equipped for war, and came to David at Hebron to turn over the kingdom of Saul to him, according to the word of the LORD:

Note that the formation of this earthly army of warriors was ***"according to the word of the LORD."*** I believe God wants to form His church into an army of spiritual warriors today. Not only is David's army like the Lord's, but individuals, officers, divisions, and armies are depicted with many battlefield attributes or characteristics. This chart highlights these characteristics as detailed in First Chronicles 12:1-40:

### Davidic Army Characteristics

Mighty, Helpers in war, armed with bows, hurl stones, and shoot arrows with both hands (12:1-2)
Men of valor, trained for battle, able to handle shield & spear, faces like lions, swift in mountainous terrain (12:8)
Empowered by the Spirit, loyal helpers (12:18)
Equipped or armed for war, fit for war, men of valor, valiant warriors (12:23-30)
Understood the times and what to do (12:32)
Expert in war with all weapons, stouthearted, able to keep ranks (12:33)
Able to keep battle formation, armed with every weapon, could keep ranks, loyal hearts, one mind (12:36-38)

The above characteristics depict an army through which God chooses to fulfill His eternal purpose on earth with His messianic covenant. In order for the new generation church to strike out on the journey before them according to the orderly arrangement of God, it must become ***like the army of God***. How did David's army become like the army of God? Can the church today become like God's army? These are important questions. Note how they are ***equipped for war*** in such a way that established the Davidic kingdom ***according to the word of the LORD***. Saul's kingdom was replaced by David's. This did not just happen! It was accomplished through much warfare. Not just any army could bring this about! It required one that was ***like the army of God***. This should be a clear message to the church today. The army of David displayed the prominent characteristics of the Lord's army. I believe it is the only way for the church today to be most effective in strategic prayer and warfare against the kingdom of darkness. It is what is required of the spiritual army of this generation. The new generation church needs what the 200 leaders from the sons of Issachar had (1Chr. 12:32). They need to understand the times in which we live and what God's people ought to do. One thing they ought to do is engage by the Spirit in strategic prayer, intercession, and warfare according to the word of the Lord.

All those in David's army were skilled warriors ready to march. Thus far, this teaching series has covered the importance of training, the use of spiritual weapons of warfare, and the necessity of operating in the power of the Holy Spirit. I want to highlight here some vital and necessary aspects regarding the battle formation of the church. I'm referring to the ability of the church as a spiritual army to keep ranks and be of one mind in battle against evil forces. One of the places where we can get a picture of these elements is in the Book of Joel. Most believe Joel's ministry occurred during the reign of King Joash of Judah who began his forty-year reign when only seven years of age. He started well in the Lord but ended in defeat because he ordered a prophet of God to be killed. Although Joel saw a locust invasion as God's judgment, he repeatedly calls both priest and the people to strategic prayer. Look at these imperatives in chapter one alone:

- Awake and weep (1:5-7)
- Lament like a virgin girded with sackcloth for the husband of her youth (1:8)
- Wail, you vinedressers (1:11-12)
- Gird yourselves and lament, you priests; wail...lie all night in sackcloth (1:13)
- Consecrate a fast, call a sacred assembly, cry out to the Lord in God's house (1:14-18)

The prophet cannot contain himself for he also begins to pray, ***"O LORD, to You I cry out!"*** This prophet, like many before and after, sounds the alarm in response to the clouds of thick darkness he sees over the nation.

- **Joel 2:1-2 Blow the trumpet in Zion, And sound an alarm in My holy mountain! Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble; For the day of the LORD is coming, For it is at hand: <sup>2</sup> A day of darkness and gloominess, A day of clouds and thick darkness, Like the morning clouds spread over the mountains. A people come, great and strong, The like of whom has never been; Nor will there ever be any such after them, Even for many successive generations.**

There's some question whether this is speaking of the locust invasion or a spiritual army. The fact that a *people* is coming may support the view of an end time scene featuring either a human army or an angelic one. There does appear to be a shift in identification of this army. However, I don't see any reason why it cannot be referring to both. It seems there's not only a warning of divine judgment here, but also an unmistakable sound of approaching spiritual battle against a supernatural darkness over a nation. God's raising up men and women who will be trumpeters in the nations to awaken a sleeping church.

The following description of this strange army impacts our understanding of the church as a spiritual army:

- **Joel 2:3-11 A fire devours before them, And behind them a flame burns; The land is like the Garden of Eden before them, And behind them a desolate wilderness; Surely nothing shall escape them. <sup>4</sup> Their appearance is like the appearance of horses; And like swift steeds, so they run. <sup>5</sup> With a noise like chariots Over mountaintops they leap, Like the noise of a flaming fire that devours the stubble, Like a strong people set in battle array. <sup>6</sup> Before them the people writhe in pain; All faces are drained of color. <sup>7</sup> They run like mighty men, They climb the wall like men of war; Every one marches in formation, And they do not break ranks. <sup>8</sup> They do not push one another; Every one marches in his own column. Though they**

lunge between the weapons, They are not cut down. <sup>9</sup> They run to and fro in the city, They run on the wall; They climb into the houses, They enter at the windows like a thief. <sup>10</sup> The earth quakes before them, The heavens tremble; The sun and moon grow dark, And the stars diminish their brightness. <sup>11</sup> The LORD gives voice before His army, For His camp is very great; For strong is the One who executes His word. For the day of the LORD is great and very terrible; Who can endure it?

Did you notice the “*people*” or nation coming to bring God’s judgment is “***like a strong people set in battle array***” (Joel 2:5)? For this reason, I believe this army depicts important aspects of a spiritual army. I like how the Revival Study Bible explains this:

“Joel’s locust army is a metaphor for the single-minded unity by which those whom God uses get the nation’s undivided attention. Joel sees in this divine judgment a picture of the Day of the Lord, a term for the coming visitation of God. His description of the way this army operates provides insight to the way a spiritual army operates during such a day of visitation.”<sup>33</sup>

What’s going to be the battle formation? The two things I mentioned earlier are the two most essential elements in this army. Note the unity and single mindedness of this army reflected in how they operate. Yes, they are strong and run like war horses. They make noise like a regiment of chariots. They leap over walls like men of war. But even more importantly, they are in formation in their own columns. Note, “***they do not break ranks***” and “***they do not push one another.***” (Joel 2:7-8). This indicates a remarkable unity and mission mindedness among these warriors. Don’t you wish the church had this today? Instead, the modern church appears divided and fragmented with many following their own priorities. But this army tunes in to God’s voice with the single purpose of accomplishing His word. (Joel 2:11). God’s voice leads them!

The Early Church possessed the unity and mission focus required to advance God’s kingdom priorities in a dark and troubled world. I believe there were two main reasons for their success. One was the strategic prayer of Jesus recorded in John 17. I will discuss this specific prayer later. The other was the commands and instructions of the resurrected Jesus during a forty-day period prior to His ascension. The primary element of Jesus’ prayer for His present and future disciples was “***that they may be one***” (John 17:11, 21, 22, 23). This was His prayer for all believers. Renowned Evangelist D.L. Moody once wrote:

“Did you ever notice that the last prayer Jesus Christ made on earth, before they led Him away to Calvary, was that His disciples might all be one? He could look down the stream of time, and see that divisions would come – how Satan would try to divide the flock of God. Nothing will silence infidels so quickly as Christians everywhere being united, then our testimony will have weight with the ungodly and the careless, but when you see how Christians are divided, they will not believe their testimony. The Holy Spirit is grieved; and there is little power where there is no unity”<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> The Revival Study Bible, 2010 p. 1202.

<sup>34</sup> IBID. p. 1487.

I'm certain the Apostles remembered Jesus' encounter with the Pharisees when they accused Him of casting out demons "**by Beelzebub, the ruler of demons.**" (Matt. 12:24).

- **Matthew 12:25 AMPC** And knowing their thoughts, He said to them, Any kingdom that is divided against itself is being brought to desolation and laid waste, and no city or house divided against itself will last or continue to stand.

Interestingly, the Greek *histemi* is the same word used here as in Ephesians 6 where it refers to a battle stance against the schemes of the devil. Could it be that clouds of darkness continue to cover people, cities, and nations because the church is divided in so many ways? Division renders the church unfit for battle.

- **Matthew 12:30 AMPC** He who is not with Me [definitely on My side] is against Me, and he who does not [definitely] gather with Me and for My side scatters.

Is a divided church really on Christ's side when it comes to strategic prayer and warfare? Paul made every effort to discourage divisions in the Church.

- **1 Corinthians 1:10** Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.
- **1 Corinthians 3:2-3** I fed you with milk and not with solid food; for until now you were not able to receive it, and even now you are still not able; <sup>3</sup> for you are still carnal. For where there are envy, strife, and divisions among you, are you not carnal and behaving like mere men?
- **Philippians 2:1-4** Therefore if there is any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and mercy, <sup>2</sup> fulfill my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. <sup>3</sup> Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. <sup>4</sup> Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.

Much of the body of Christ is unable to receive advanced teaching on strategic prayer or even set itself in some semblance of a battle formation because of divisions. In addition to the basic doctrines of Christ, the Early Church fully agreed with Jesus' instructions about the Holy Spirit. One Greek word, *homothumadon* (hom-oth-oo-mad-on') describes their unity more than any other. This word is usually translated in English as "**with one accord.**" The word refers to a state of "*being unanimous, having mutual consent, being in agreement, having group unity, having one mind and purpose.*" The word occurs ten times in the book of Acts. It described a unity in the Early Church leading to action. The church lacks this unity in Christ today, especially when it comes to being filled with the Holy Spirit. Does the church have the same mind of Christ about the Holy Spirit? There are two things necessary for this generation to regain the battle formation required to overcome demonic forces: Oneness with Christ's mission and purpose and being filled with the Holy Spirit in alignment with the word of God. This generation needs to get a handle on the Holy Spirit before they find themselves overrun by the spirit of the world.

## The Battle March

Armies move forward. They advance. They march in line without deviating from their ordered course of action. Although specific battle plans may change, an army moves straight forward on the mission. I'm certain the walls of Jericho looked humanly impossible to overcome in battle. As I pointed out earlier, The Commander of the Lord's army appeared to Joshua with His sword drawn to reveal the heavenly army was ready to help (Josh. 5:13-15). In addition, there were unique battle plans given by heavenly counsel. The order of march was given to the whole army.

- Joshua 6:3-7 "You shall march around the city, all you men of war; you shall go all around the city once. This you shall do six days. <sup>4</sup> "And seven priests shall bear seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark. But the seventh day you shall march around the city seven times, and the priests shall blow the trumpets. <sup>5</sup> "It shall come to pass, when they make a long blast with the ram's horn, and when you hear the sound of the trumpet, that all the people shall shout with a great shout; then the wall of the city will fall down flat. And the people shall go up every man straight before him." <sup>6</sup> Then Joshua the son of Nun called the priests and said to them, "Take up the ark of the covenant, and let seven priests bear seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark of the LORD." <sup>7</sup> And he said to the people, "Proceed, and march around the city, and let him who is armed advance before the ark of the LORD."

Note how those equipped for war; those who have put on the warrior's belt, march ahead of the Ark. You might say, "*They've received their marching orders.*" They go forth according to God's instructions. The point is that the army is advancing against the enemy. The Lord marches before them to secure the victory as we learned in David's battle with the Philistine army.

- 2 Samuel 5:24 "And it shall be, when you hear the sound of marching in the tops of the mulberry trees, then you shall advance quickly. For then the LORD will go out before you to strike the camp of the Philistines."

Battles are secured when the Lord marches forward. Even natural elements must respond and acknowledge His Lordship. Everything must support the war effort when God's in it. In addition, an order of march is necessary to effectively advance. When God led the armies of Israel forth it was according to an **order of march**, He had given them.

- Num. 10:28 Thus was the order of march of the children of Israel, according to their armies, when they began their journey.
- Num. 9:23 At the command of the LORD they remained encamped, and at the command of the LORD they journeyed; they kept the charge of the LORD, at the command of the LORD by the hand of Moses.
- Num. 10:33-36 So they departed from the mountain of the LORD on a journey of three days; and the ark of the covenant of the LORD went before them for the three days' journey, to search out a resting place for them. <sup>34</sup> And the cloud of the LORD was above them by day when they went out from the camp. <sup>34</sup> So it was, whenever the ark set out, that Moses said: "Rise up, O LORD! Let Your enemies be scattered, And let those who hate You flee before You." <sup>36</sup> And when it rested, he said: "Return, O LORD, To the many thousands of Israel."

Note how the order of march was according to their armies and at the command of the LORD. The Lord did not permit them to park at the mountain of the LORD. Instead, they marched forward in an orderly manner with the ark of the covenant going before them. In other words, God led the way. Much of the church seems incapable of striking out in such a way. Where is the battle cry of this generation, ***Rise up, O LORD! Let Your enemies be scattered.***

What's the order of march against the spirit of Babylon and other demonic princes of darkness? The actual deployment of spiritual troops varies with heavenly counsel. Sometimes God orders the army to set ambushes. Other times He commands them to encircle a city. We've also seen examples of God ordering specific prophetic acts. And there are times when He instructs His army to stand still because the heavenly troops have this one in hand. However, the Scriptures reveal an identifiable strategic pattern of engagement on the spiritual battlefield. The prophets render several judgments against the nations that come against Israel and Judah. There are two chapters in Jeremiah that caught my attention while preparing for a deliverance and warfare mission to the nation of Nigeria. I see a strategic pattern in these chapters. There are clear preparatory instructions like these:

<b>Preparatory Instructions</b>	<b>Application</b>
<i>Declare among the nations</i> (Jer. 50:2) <i>Proclaim, and set up a standard</i> (Jer. 50:2) <i>Proclaim – do not conceal it</i> (Jer. 50:2) <i>Set up a banner in the land</i> (Jer. 51:27)	Boldly speak in agreement with what God has spoken before the battle, declaring the authority and power of our Lord Jesus Christ over all idols. These words of faith are a signal to nations and demonic princes that our God reigns.
<i>Seek the LORD their God...with continual weeping</i> (Jer. 50:4) <i>Ask the way to Zion</i> (Jer. 50:5)	Humbly intercede for the land with deep travail, knowing that such intercession gives birth to victory. Inquire of the Lord for specific details before engaging in battle.
<i>Join ourselves to the LORD in a perpetual covenant</i> (Jer. 50:5)	Unite with others & commit to Christ and His mission and purpose with unwavering loyalty. (note: like soldiers' oath of office)
<i>Move from the midst of Babylon</i> (Jer. 50:8) <i>Flee from the midst of Babylon, and everyone save his life! Do not be cut off in her iniquity</i> (Jer. 51:8)	Detach yourself from any cultural influence related to idolatry and demonic practices. (note: good soldiers avoid entanglements with the world)
<i>Put yourselves in array against Babylon all around</i> (Jer. 50:14) <i>Set in array, like a man for the battle, against you, O daughter of Babylon</i> (Jer. 50:42)	Clothe yourself with God's armor. Train in the use of all spiritual weapons. Learn about targeted area for attack and any specific mission assignments. Assemble with other soldiers of Christ.
<i>Hear the counsel of the LORD that He has taken against Babylon and His purposes that He has purposed against the land of the Chaldeans</i> (Jer. 50:45) <i>Make the arrows bright! Gather the shields!</i> (Jer. 51:11)	Pay close attention to what God says about the situation and His battle plans for the nation. Position under heavenly counsel. Pray for cleansing stream and fresh consecration before Christ. Worship the Lord. Seek fresh anointing & take steps to increase faith. Pray in the Holy Spirit.
<i>Set up a banner in the land, Blow the trumpet among the nations! Prepare the nations against her, call the kingdoms together against her, appoint a general against her, cause the horses to come up like bristling locusts. Prepare against her the nations</i> (Jer. 51:27-28)	Sound the alarm as a signal of war against the spirit of Babylon. Assemble a coalition of Christian warriors to join the fight against demonic forces in the targeted region.

I also discovered commands of engagement in these two chapters of Jeremiah. Although *charash* warriors are involved before almost every biblical battle, I noticed that the *watchmen* were also placed on the Babylonian wall during this projected battle. This reveals they were also involved in the actual assault. Let's take a closer look at the commands of engagement on the battlefield.

Commands of Engagement	Application
<i>Shoot at her, spare no arrows</i> (Jer. 50:14)	Throw all you've got at the enemy site with a concentration of forces and firepower that destroys Satan's hold on the city and nation.
<i>Shout against her all around</i> (Jer. 50:15)	Use a unified war cry with heavenly forces to strike & weaken the enemies will to fight, causing his complete submission & surrender to God's reign.
<i>Cut off the sower from Babylon</i> (Jer. 50:16)	Praise God to silence the demons from speaking and propagating their evil philosophies.
<i>Come against her from the farthest border</i> (Jer. 50:26)	Engage spiritual warriors from the nations in the battle.
<i>Call together the archers against Babylon... encamp against it all around</i> (Jer. 50:29)	Launch an early & relentless attack against specific territorial spirits over the region.
<i>Against her let the archer bend his bow</i> (Jer. 51:3)	
<i>A sword is against the Chaldeans...</i> (Jer. 50:35-38)	Boldly preach God's word and use the word of truth and the word of faith as a two-edged sword against every demonic stronghold.
<i>Set up the standard on the walls of Babylon; make the guard strong, set up the watchmen, prepare the ambushes</i> (Jer. 51:12)	Deploy and engage a battalion of <i>charash</i> warriors throughout the battle. Resolve to guard those taken captive for Christ. Be firm on following God's devised plan.

The strategic patterns revealed in this future and coming engagement on the battlefield speaks volumes to the church today. There's a strategic level of prayer and engagement we must seek to set captives free from demonic strongholds. There's a strong message for this generation of leaders and believers. It's a wake-up call to the church because there's the sound of battle in the land. What God spoke to Cyrus of Persia; He's also speaking to the church of the future:

- **Jeremiah 51:20-23 "You are My battle-ax and weapons of war: For with you I will break the nation in pieces; With you I will destroy kingdoms; <sup>21</sup> With you I will break in pieces the horse and its rider; With you I will break in pieces the chariot and its rider; <sup>22</sup> With you also I will break in pieces man and woman; With you I will break in pieces old and young; With you I will break in pieces the young man and the maiden; <sup>23</sup> With you also I will break in pieces the shepherd and his flock; With you I will break in pieces the farmer and his yoke of oxen; And with you I will break in pieces governors and rulers.**

This is a call for all spiritual warriors to arise. This is a call for the church, God's army on earth, to be transformed into the triumphant church that will "**break in pieces**" demonic strongholds and structures over cities, regions, and nations of the world.

# Teaching Series #4: Strategic Prayer Initiatives

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## Unity

Unity is one of the most prominent prayer initiatives in the church today. Although I have discussed it earlier in this equipping manual, it is extremely important to recognize it also as a strategic prayer initiative. This is because unity remains one of the things most lacking in the church. The lack of unity in the church has caused many leaders to merely compromise for the sake of cooperation. This was not the case in the Early Church. In this final teaching series, I will take a look at some of the strategic prayer initiatives in the Bible. The most prominent prayer initiative regarding unity is found in the prayer of Jesus Himself. This served as the model for the Early Church.

- **John 17:1-26** Jesus spoke these words, lifted up His eyes to heaven, and said: “Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You, <sup>2</sup> as You have given Him authority over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as You have given Him. <sup>3</sup> And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent. <sup>4</sup> I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do. <sup>5</sup> And now, O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was. <sup>6</sup> “I have manifested Your name to the men whom You have given Me out of the world. They were Yours, You gave them to Me, and they have kept Your word. <sup>7</sup> Now they have known that all things which You have given Me are from You. <sup>8</sup> For I have given to them the words which You have given Me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came forth from You; and they have believed that You sent Me. <sup>9</sup> “I pray for them. I do not pray for the world but for those whom You have given Me, for they are Yours. <sup>10</sup> And all Mine are Yours, and Yours are Mine, and I am glorified in them. <sup>11</sup> Now I am no longer in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to You. Holy Father, keep through Your name those whom You have given Me, that they may be one as We are. <sup>12</sup> While I was with them in the world, I kept them in Your name. Those whom You gave Me I have kept; and none of them is lost except the son of perdition, that the Scripture might be fulfilled. <sup>13</sup> But now I come to You, and these things I speak in the world, that they may have My joy fulfilled in themselves. <sup>14</sup> I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. <sup>15</sup> I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one. <sup>16</sup> They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. <sup>17</sup> Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth. <sup>18</sup> As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world. <sup>19</sup> And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also may be sanctified by the truth. <sup>20</sup> “I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; <sup>21</sup> 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 sent Me. <sup>22</sup> And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one: <sup>23</sup> I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me. <sup>24</sup> “Father, I desire that they also whom You gave Me may be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory which You

have given Me; for You loved Me before the foundation of the world. <sup>25</sup> O righteous Father! The world has not known You, but I have known You; and these have known that You sent Me. <sup>26</sup> And I have declared to them Your name, and will declare it, that the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them.”

This prayer by Jesus is the longest in the Gospels. It is sometimes referred to as the *High Priestly Prayer*. This is fitting since the Bible says Jesus is our High Priest and the Lord of all. Therefore, it is important to understand what Jesus was praying for and the strategic nature of His prayer. So, what and who is He praying for? Jesus said, ***I pray for them*** (John 17:9). Jesus prays first for His apostles, except for Judas Iscariot who betrayed Him that the Scriptures might be fulfilled (John 17:12). Jesus prays for His Holy Father to keep them ***that they may be one as We are*** (John 17:11). I believe this strongly indicates spiritual leaders have a God given mandate to pray for and pursue unity in Christ. Jesus also prays for them to have His ***joy fulfilled in themselves*** (John 17:13), to be kept or guarded ***from the evil one*** (John 17:15), and for His Father to ***sanctify them by Your truth*** and this comes by the Word of truth (John 17:17-19).

The above prayer initiatives are just as important today as then. However, it is the prayer for unity that stands out. Pay close attention to the shift Jesus makes in His prayer from His apostles to those who would believe through them in the near future (John 17:20). And what does He pray for the new generation of disciples? Once again, it is unity.

- John 17:20-23 “I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; <sup>21</sup> 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 sent Me. <sup>22</sup> And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one: <sup>23</sup> I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me.

Note that Jesus does not just pray for some partial or incomplete unity, but ***that they may be made perfect in one***. This is referring to a completeness that comes from an accomplished fulfillment that requires labor. In other words, you have to grow into this level of spiritual unity.

The battle for unity in the church is a serious battle that requires a most serious and strategic prayer initiative. The Early Church experienced the unity Jesus prayed for and they also experienced the damaging nature of division. However, they confronted division head on both in prayer and in their public pleas for unity.

- 1Cor. 1:10 Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and ***that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.***

The Bible records the strategic effect upon the Early Church of Jesus’ prayer for unity. The Bible says leaders and believers were in ***one accord*** in mind and purpose. I defined what this meant in an earlier series. Here are just a few examples.

- Acts 1:14 These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brothers.

- Acts 2:1 When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.
- Acts 2:46 So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart.
- Acts 4:24 So when they heard that, they raised their voice to God with one accord and said: “Lord, You *are* God, who made heaven and earth and the sea, and all that is in them.
- Acts 5:12 And through the hands of the apostles many signs and wonders were done among the people. And they were all with one accord in Solomon’s Porch.
- Acts 8:6 And the multitudes with one accord heeded the things spoken by Philip, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did.
- Acts 15:25 it seemed good to us, being assembled with one accord, to send chosen men to you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul.

The Early Church had a remarkable unity in response to the strategic prayer initiative of Jesus. Division, however, became a serious issue as it is today. Nevertheless, Paul prayed and exhorted believers to be like minded.

- Rom. 15:5-6 Now may the God of patience and comfort grant you to be like-minded toward one another, according to Christ Jesus, <sup>6</sup> that you may with one mind *and* one mouth glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.
- Eph. 4:1-6 I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, <sup>2</sup> with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, <sup>3</sup> endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. <sup>4</sup> *There is* one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; <sup>5</sup> one Lord, one faith, one baptism; <sup>6</sup> one God and Father of all, who *is* above all, and through all, and in you all.
- Phil. 2:1-3 Therefore if *there is* any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and mercy, <sup>2</sup> fulfill my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, *being* of one accord, of one mind. <sup>3</sup> *Let* nothing *be done* through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. <sup>4</sup> Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.
- Phil. 4:2 I implore Euodia and I implore Syntyche to be of the same mind in the Lord.

The unity many church leaders call for today is not the unity of the Bible or that which Jesus prayed for. It is important to understand that the unity of the Bible is **according to Christ Jesus** and is in the **fellowship of the Spirit**. You cannot have one without the other. You have to be in the Lord and in fellowship with the Holy Spirit to accomplish the unity Jesus prayed for. This applies to individual believers and the whole church. This truth must be accepted by all before engaging in a strategic prayer initiative for unity. The ecumenical linking of denominations will never produce unity in Christ and the Holy Spirit because no one is getting untied from the things that divide. As one leader said, “*You can tie two or three tomcats together by their tails, but that won’t get unity.*”<sup>35</sup> In addition, common phrases to achieve unity like, “*We agree to disagree*” or “*It*

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<sup>35</sup> Ron Graham. Christian Unity. [Christian Unity - Christ’s Prayer, Paul’s Plea, God’s Plan for the Unity of Believers \(simplybible.com\)](http://simplybible.com).

*does not matter what your doctrine is*” only produces some pretense of unity. We must stop underestimating or trivializing the value of spiritual agreement in the body of Christ. Strategic prayer initiatives today for Christian unity must align with and be defined by God’s word.

- **Matt. 18:19-20** 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. For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them.

The Greek word for agree in the above verses is *sumphoneo*. It joins two words meaning *together* and *to sound*. It is where we derive the word *symphony*. Therefore, it is referring to a harmonious sound together in one accord. Note this unity is in the context of prayer. What does strategic prayer in the church sound like today? Does it sound like a symphony or a broken record? Higher levels of prayer engagements are needed to produce a symphony of prayer that invites the participation of heaven.

## **Holy Spirit**

Jesus described the Holy Spirit as the *parakletos* or Helper, Comforter, Advocate. The word literally refers to one who comes alongside to help.

- **John 14:16-18** And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever— <sup>17</sup> the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you. <sup>18</sup> I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you.

This means Jesus prayed for His followers to be given the Holy Spirit. This became one of the clearest ministry priorities of the Early Church.

- **Acts 1:14** These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brothers. (See Acts 2:1-4)
- **Acts 4:31** And when they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness.
- **Acts 8:14-15** Now when the apostles who were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them, <sup>15</sup> who, when they had come down, prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit.
- **Acts 9:17** And Ananias went his way and entered the house; and laying his hands on him he said, “Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you came, has sent me that you may receive your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit.”
- **Acts 19:6-7** And when Paul had laid hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke with tongues and prophesied. <sup>7</sup> Now the men were about twelve in all.

The 120 who received the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost were praying for ten days before the Holy Spirit was poured out upon them. The Holy Spirit fell upon the Early Church again when they were threatened and persecuted by authorities when they were engaged in strategic prayer (Acts 4:23-31). They even prayed for the Samaritans to receive the Holy Spirit upon hearing of their salvation (Acts 8:14-15). It is inconceivable for any strategic prayer initiative today to exclude the Holy Spirit. But that is what has

been done over and over again by many churches today. Have you ever wondered why Jesus told His followers to wait in Jerusalem until they were empowered by the Holy Spirit (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:4-5)? And have you ever wondered why the Early Church over and over again ministered the Holy Spirit to believers in Christ? It appears to be the first thing they did! In addition, to the power to become the most effective witnesses of Jesus on earth (Acts 1:8), the power of the Holy Spirit is needed for strategic prayer engagement.

- **Rom. 8:26-27 Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. <sup>27</sup> Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God.**

The call for strategic intercession is strong today. The Holy Spirit is needed to help make intercession. I have intentionally spoke a lot about the Holy Spirit in this equipping manual. He is indispensable! There can be no greater intercession in the church than the intercession by the Holy Spirit. He helps us intercede. He will guide the body of Christ to higher and more strategic levels of intercession. It is fascinating to say the least that the Greek word for help in this Romans 8:26 is *sunantilambanomai*. The prefix *sun* is a primary preposition denoting union with or together leading to completeness. Therefore, this strategic prayer initiative is talking about a specific participation in close association and unity with the Holy Spirit. How helpful is this in strategic prayer gatherings? The church cannot function in strategic levels of prayer and warfare without receiving and cooperating with the Holy Spirit in the same way.

The Holy Spirit is irreplaceable in all the work of the Lord. Strategic prayer is no exception. If you don't hear the name of Jesus being lifted up and the Holy Spirit engaging with the praying saints, then He is being excluded in some way. It is best to stop at that point and pray this ancient church prayer.

*Breathe in me, O Holy Spirit, that my thoughts may all be holy. Act in me, O Holy Spirit, that my work, too, may be holy. Draw my heart, O Holy Spirit, that I love but what is holy. Strengthen me, O Holy Spirit, to defend all that is holy. Guard me, then, O Holy Spirit, that I always may be holy. Amen.*<sup>36</sup>

## **Spiritual Knowledge and Understanding**

This particular strategic prayer initiative is also well documented in the Scriptures. Jesus talked about the Holy Spirit teaching us all things (John 14:26). Furthermore, He said when the Holy Spirit comes, He will guide us into all truth, and even tell us things to come (John 16:13). The Early Church recognized that spiritual knowledge and understanding did not come from human wisdom but from the Holy Spirit.

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<sup>36</sup> The Prayer was written by Augustine of Hippo (A.D. 354-430), an early church father and theologian. Augustine developed the doctrine of original sin and argued that the grace of Christ is central to the practice of the Christian faith. In this respect his writings foreshadowed the Protestant Reformation's teaching on the sufficiency of Christ's death and resurrection for individual salvation.

- 1Cor. 2:6-16 However, we speak wisdom among those who are mature, yet not the wisdom of this age, nor of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing. <sup>7</sup> But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden *wisdom* which God ordained before the ages for our glory, <sup>8</sup> which none of the rulers of this age knew; for had they known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. <sup>9</sup> But as it is written: “*Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, Nor have entered into the heart of man The things which God has prepared for those who love Him.*” <sup>10</sup> But God has revealed *them* to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God. <sup>11</sup> For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God. <sup>12</sup> Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God. <sup>13</sup> These things we also speak, not in words which man’s wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual. <sup>14</sup> But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know *them*, because they are spiritually discerned. <sup>15</sup> But he who is spiritual judges all things, yet he himself is *rightly* judged by no one. <sup>16</sup> For “*who has known the mind of the LORD that he may instruct Him?*” But we have the mind of Christ.

Strategic prayer initiatives need the spiritual knowledge and understanding that comes only by the Spirit in order to be effective. Many prayer gatherings today display more human management than spiritual. Such religious humanism is doomed to fail. It should have no place in any prayer engagement. Occasionally, Jesus challenged His disciples saying, ***Are you still without understanding?*** (Matt. 15:16) Capturing and understanding the ***deep things of God*** by the Spirit in strategic prayer instills ***the mind of Christ*** into each prayer warrior.

The Early Church recognized the strategic prayer initiative of seeking spiritual knowledge and understanding. In fact, they specifically engaged in prayer for it. A review some of these prayers demonstrates their active engagement in praying for spiritual understanding.

1. Eph. 1:15-23 Therefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints, <sup>16</sup> do not cease to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers: <sup>17</sup> that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, <sup>18</sup> the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, <sup>19</sup> and what *is* the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power <sup>20</sup> which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated *Him* at His right hand in the heavenly *places*, <sup>21</sup> far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come. <sup>22</sup> And He put all *things* under His feet, and gave Him *to be* head over all *things* to the church, <sup>23</sup> which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.
2. Eph. 3:14-21 For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, <sup>15</sup> from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, <sup>16</sup> that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man, <sup>17</sup> that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, <sup>18</sup> may be able to comprehend with all the saints what *is* the width and

length and depth and height— <sup>19</sup> to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. <sup>20</sup> Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, <sup>21</sup> to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.

3. Phil. 1:9-11 And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in knowledge and all discernment, <sup>10</sup> that you may approve the things that are excellent, that you may be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ, <sup>11</sup> being filled with the fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.
4. Col. 1:9-14 For this reason we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; <sup>10</sup> that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing *Him*, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; <sup>11</sup> strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, for all patience and longsuffering with joy; <sup>12</sup> giving thanks to the Father who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light. <sup>13</sup> He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed *us* into the kingdom of the Son of His love, <sup>14</sup> in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins.

Note what Paul is praying for: spiritual wisdom, revelation, knowledge, and understanding (Eph. 1:17-18); the ability to comprehend with all the saints (Eph. 3:18); to abound in spiritual knowledge and discernment (Phil. 1:9) and to be filled with knowledge, wisdom, and spiritual understanding of His will (Col. 1:9-10). The emphasis on this strategic prayer initiative is undeniable. Spiritual knowledge and understanding are there by the Spirit to be taken or seized in strategic prayer today. This generation must reach for it!

## Open Doors

The Bible exhorts believers to pray for many things. However, I am presenting some strategic prayer initiatives to help remnant believers to engage in strategic level prayer actively and effectively. I have briefly discussed the prayer initiatives of unity, the Holy Spirit, and spiritual knowledge and understanding. I pray you can see the unique value in each of these initiatives. Now I want to turn our attention to the strategic prayer initiative of praying for open doors. Certainly, we are to pray for the power of the Holy Spirit to witness to the ends of the earth (Acts 1:8), for boldness to preach the Word (Acts 4:29), and for healing, signs, and wonders to be done in the name of Jesus (Acts 4:30). However, ministry will be somewhat limited without the open doors to do so. Therefore, it is very strategic to pray for open doors.

The resurrected Jesus identified Himself to the church in Philadelphia as ***He who is holy, He who is true, He who has the key of David, He who opens and no one shuts, and shuts and no one opens*** (Rev. 1:7). He speaks further to the church of an open door.

- Rev. 3:8-13 “I know your works. See, I have set before you an open door, and no one can shut it; for you have a little strength, have kept My word, and have not denied My name. <sup>9</sup> Indeed I will make *those* of the synagogue of Satan, who say they are Jews and are not, but

lie—indeed I will make them come and worship before your feet, and to know that I have loved you. <sup>10</sup> Because you have kept My command to persevere, I also will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth. <sup>11</sup> Behold, I am coming quickly! Hold fast what you have, that no one may take your crown. <sup>12</sup> He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go out no more. I will write on him the name of My God and the name of the city of My God, the New Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God. And *I will write on him My new name.* <sup>13</sup> “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.” ’

Although the message was addressed to the church in Philadelphia, it is a message by the Spirit to all the churches (Rev. 3:13). So, what is the open-door Jesus is speaking of? We know from the Scriptures that He is referring to a door of opportunity for effective ministry and evangelism but also the door for His kingdom now and in the future. Paul spoke of a great and effective door opened in Ephesus.

- 1Cor. 16:8-9 But I will tarry in Ephesus until Pentecost. <sup>9</sup> For a great and effective door has opened to me, and *there are many adversaries.*

Note there were many adversaries in the midst of this open door. Strategic prayer involves high level spiritual warfare because there is much resistance to the gospel. Paul also spoke of an open door when he was in Troas.

- 2Cor. 2:12-17 Furthermore, when I came to Troas to *preach* Christ’s gospel, and a door was opened to me by the Lord, <sup>13</sup> I had no rest in my spirit, because I did not find Titus my brother; but taking my leave of them, I departed for Macedonia. <sup>14</sup> Now thanks *be* to God who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and through us diffuses the fragrance of His knowledge in every place. <sup>15</sup> For we are to God the fragrance of Christ among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing. <sup>16</sup> To the one *we are* the aroma of death *leading* to death, and to the other the aroma of life *leading* to life. And *who is* sufficient for these things? <sup>17</sup> For we are not, as so many, peddling the word of God; but as of sincerity, but as from God, we speak in the sight of God in Christ.

The open door was presented to Paul ***by the Lord***. Did Paul pray for such an open door or did it just happen by some coincidence. Here are some examples confirming he prayed for such doors of opportunity and encouraged believers to also pray for the same.

- Rom. 1:8-15 First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world. <sup>9</sup> For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of His Son, that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers, <sup>10</sup> making request if, by some means, now at last I may find a way in the will of God to come to you. <sup>11</sup> For I long to see you, that I may impart to you some spiritual gift, so that you may be established— <sup>12</sup> that is, that I may be encouraged together with you by the mutual faith both of you and me. <sup>13</sup> Now I do not want you to be unaware, brethren, that I often planned to come to you (but was hindered until now), that I might have some fruit among you also, just as among the other Gentiles. <sup>14</sup> I am a debtor both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to wise and to unwise. <sup>15</sup> So, as much as is in me, *I am* ready to preach the gospel to you who are in Rome also.

- Col. 4:2-4 Continue earnestly in prayer, being vigilant in it with thanksgiving; <sup>3</sup> meanwhile praying also for us, that God would open to us a door for the word, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in chains, <sup>4</sup> that I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak.
- 1Th. 3:9-12 For what thanks can we render to God for you, for all the joy with which we rejoice for your sake before our God, <sup>10</sup> night and day praying exceedingly that we may see your face and perfect what is lacking in your faith? <sup>11</sup> Now may our God and Father Himself, and our Lord Jesus Christ, direct our way to you. <sup>12</sup> And may the Lord make you increase and abound in love to one another and to all, just as we *do* to you, <sup>13</sup> so that He may establish your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all His saints.

We can conclude from the above examples that praying for open doors was indeed a strategic prayer initiative in the Early Church. Leaders need to engage the body of Christ in this initiative today. The effectiveness of spreading the gospel with an exponential increase is dependent upon this prayer initiative. The Holy Spirit speaks, and doors open when this initiative is included in strategic prayer. A good example of this is in the church at Antioch.

- Acts 13:1-3 Now in the church that was at Antioch there were certain prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. <sup>2</sup> As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, "Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." <sup>3</sup> Then, having fasted and prayed, and laid hands on them, they sent *them* away.

The Gospel was spread to the ends of the earth through the doors opened by the Lord through strategic prayer. There remains a great end time harvest before us today. And it is ripe. The church needs to pray for open doors!

## **Laborers**

The mission instructions given to the seventy have a specific application to the harvest of souls in every place and generation. The following Scriptures establish the praying for laborers as a strategic prayer initiative.

- Luke 10:1-2 After these things the Lord appointed seventy others also, and sent them two by two before His face into every city and place where He Himself was about to go. <sup>2</sup> Then He said to them, "The harvest truly *is* great, but the laborers *are* few; therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest. (Matt. 9:37)
- John 4:34-38 Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work. <sup>35</sup> Do you not say, 'There are still four months and *then* comes the harvest'? Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest! <sup>36</sup> And he who reaps receives wages, and gathers fruit for eternal life, that both he who sows and he who reaps may rejoice together. <sup>37</sup> For in this the saying is true: "One sows and another reaps." <sup>38</sup> I sent you to reap that for which you have not labored; others have labored, and you have entered into their labors."
- 2Th. 3:1-2 Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may run *swiftly* and be glorified, just as *it is* with you, <sup>2</sup> and that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men; for not all have faith.

I have noticed in prayer gatherings that there is more prayer for the harvest than for laborers to be sent out into the harvest. However, Jesus, the Lord of the Harvest, specifically instructs us to pray to Him to send out more laborers. Why? It is because the harvest is great and it is ripe! Multitudes are about to perish unless more laborers are sent out. It is very revealing that a unique word is used for prayer in Luke 10:2 and Matthew 9:37. *Deomai* (deh'-om-ahee) represents a very serious request to the Lord. The skilled intercessor is bound in prayer like a beggar to what he or she is asking of the Lord. This again shows the strategic nature of this prayer initiative.

Praying to the Lord for more laborers is essential today just as it was when Jesus walked the face of the earth. The harvest fields are just as ripe in this generation. The Apostle Paul's prayer request demonstrates not merely the urgency about laborers, but also how this strategic prayer initiative applies to both leaders and believers. He asks them to ***pray for us, that the word of the Lord may run swiftly***. *Us* refers to a plurality of laborers Paul is in teamwork with; however, he adds, ***just as it is with you***. This reflects the truth that the people of God are also laborers sent into the harvest. These may seem like minor points to some, but they are enormous when it comes to strategic prayer, intercession, and warfare. The Lord of the Harvest desires His word to run hastily and speedily throughout the world. Do the prayers of the church today reflect this urgency?

The strategic prayer initiatives discussed in this equipping session are essential for the effective advance of God's kingdom on the earth. They are Bible-based and Spirit-directed. The new generation church must reclaim and reactivate them in corporate prayer settings around the world. I believe it is fitting to conclude our study on the topic of strategic prayer with the call for more earnest and serious prayer aligned with God's word and directed by the Holy Spirit in every place. Is there a higher and more strategic level of prayer, intercession, and warfare available to the church today? I believe the answer is yes and amen.

**But the end of all things is at hand; therefore be serious and watchful in your prayers. 1Peter 4:7**

## **Appendix 1**

### **Types of Praying During Strategic Prayer Engagements**

**Definition of Intercessory Prayer** – “Intercessory prayer is an extension of the ministry of Jesus through His body, the Church, whereby we mediate between God and humanity for the purpose of reconciling the world to Him, or between Satan and humanity for the purpose of enforcing the victory of Calvary.” (*Intercessory Prayer*, by Dutch Sheets, p. 42)

**Definition of Corporate Intercession** – “Constant and fervent prayer regularly sustained at the strategic levels of spiritual warfare over a region by a group of trained intercessors at the same time and place leading to a measurable increase of captives set free.” (Michael Gross, 5-Fold Global Ministries)

**One Accord Praying** – All pray out loud at the same time and sustain this fervent prayer for long periods of time.

**Prayer of Agreement** – One person prays out loud and the others pray in agreement.

**Scripture Praying** – The Holy Spirit leads one or more pray-ers to open the Bible to a passage of Scripture and partially read the text and partially pray what the Lord is showing them about the implications of the text for the actual situation.

**Praying in the Spirit** – Pray-ers pray and praise out loud in other tongues (heavenly syllables or languages not understood by the speaker) and/or specially anointed words of understanding (words understood by all, but divinely anointed for the respective context).

**Prophetic Intercession** – The Holy Spirit prompts intercessors to pray something they have little or no knowledge of by giving them the ability to receive an immediate assignment from the Father and pray about it in a divinely anointed utterance.

**Travail** – Intercessors go through a spiritual birthing process commonly noted by a rocking motion, weeping, groaning, and wailing during prayer.

**Prayer and Praise Warfare** – Those praying advance against enemy strongholds utilizing the weapons of warfare as offensive weapons to effectively silence and overrun the enemy positions. (Note: Our Praise silences the enemy)

**Prayer Walking** – (Praying on site with insight) Pray-ers pray while walking around or through key positions of known satanic fortifications treading on the enemy and evicting demonic forces.

## **Appendix 2**

### **Characteristics of Strategic Prayer Engagements**

**Intercessors** gather to pray rather than talk.

**Intercessors** sustain prayer for long periods of time, normally an hour or more.

**Intercessors** focus on God's corporate vision for cities and nations rather than personal needs.

**Intercessors** boldly cry out to God with a loud voice and at other times quietly wait in His presence.

**Intercessors** utilize all types of praying including tongues as well as written prayers.

**Intercessors** follow the agenda ordered by the Spirit of God and not one particular individual.

**Intercessors** share prophetic visions, scriptures, and words of revelation from God without preaching, teaching, or correcting others.

**Intercessors** skilled on instruments of music are encouraged to play prophetically.

**Intercessors** flow in the Spirit together (the corporate flow of the whole body) rather than personal ministry.

**Intercessors** minister unto the Lord in prayer and fasting and listen to His voice.

**Intercessors** engage the enemy through militant intercession (spiritual warfare) to dispel demonic forces.

**Intercessors** move in the corporate anointing as they foster teamwork rather than individual "charisma."

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