

Putting Things Into Spiritual Perspective

If you're Pentecostal or charismatic, you are probably familiar with the phrase "spiritual warfare." It's a phrase we use to describe the unseen battle between the kingdom of God and the kingdom of darkness. Everything we do has an effect on this spiritual battle, and spiritual forces have an effect on us as well. At times when we are under spiritual attack, we can feel an increased intensity or struggle to accomplish what we feel God has called us to do.

I have found that the topic of spiritual warfare is so relevant to our culture and the upcoming election that I included a chapter about it in my latest book, *God, Trump and the 2020 Election*, from which this article is adapted. I wrote that book to help explain what is happening spiritually in our nation. Many Christians see the current division in our country as a sign of spiritual warfare. There are spiritual beings assigned to oversee various realms and territories. This explains why charismatics and even many evangelical Christians see what is going on in our country and in Trump's presidency as a spiritual battle. Even some mainline Protestants who usually avoid acknowledging such things as demonic spirits admit that the vitriol has gotten so extreme in America that maybe there is spiritual warfare behind it.

In biblical terms, Christians are told they "wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers ... against spiritual wickedness in high places" (Eph. 6:12, KJV). It's like in Frank Peretti's novel *This Present Darkness*, which allowed the reader to see the unseen evil forces influencing the fictional characters in the book.

I like the way Daniel Kolenda, international missionary and successor to world-renowned evangelist Reinhard Bonnke as

president and CEO of Christ for All Nations, explains where we got the phrase “spiritual warfare.” He wrote in his book *Slaying Dragons*: “Like many useful terms, the phrase ‘spiritual warfare’ does not appear in Scripture as such. The wording is instead rooted in the use of scriptural military analogies to describe the manner in which Christ followers are to prepare for and repel evil.” He then refers to Paul’s instruction to put on spiritual armor in Ephesians 6 as probably the most famous example of this type of military word picture. He says this illustrates to Christians that we are to treat the battle between good and evil as a matter of life and death.

I’m not a theologian. I’m a Christian journalist. And this is not a treatise on the supernatural. But as a Christian who is aware of this unseen world and someone who believes we have authority over these powers through the name and blood of Jesus, I could not write a book about all that is at stake for our country without shedding light on the very real struggle in the spiritual realm. It’s critical to look with spiritual eyes at America and our unlikely president, who stands strong for what I believe is right while experiencing unparalleled attacks that often defy reason.

In fact, to me, the vengeance with which some people hate Trump can *only* be understood if seen in spiritual terms. Of course there are many examples of unspeakable evil that at least make sense when seen in spiritual terms. Recognizing spiritual forces makes it easier to understand the actions of a Hitler or why there has been genocide in places like Rwanda.

You can understand these horrible things better when you realize that both God and Satan operate in the earth through people. Kolenda explains it this way:

“We glorify God most when we fulfill the purpose for which He made us. That is why He has constrained Himself in such a way that He will not act in the earth without us. ... Likewise,

Satan *cannot* work without us. Everything evil that happens in this world comes through evil people. Everything godly that happens in this world comes through godly people. This is why Satan tempts people to sin. He has no real power in this world except what we, the gatekeepers, give to him."

So if we can accept that there is a devil and he influences humans to do his bidding, then we can conclude that people are subject to these spiritual authorities, even if they don't understand what they are doing or why.

Other books about Trump's presidency or our country's current affairs will likely explain everything in political or cultural terms. I believe, however, that the only way to truly discern what's happening in our nation is through spiritual eyes. This is not a war between left and right or between Democrats and Republicans or even between President Trump and his political opponents. It's spiritual warfare.

Stephen Strang *is founder of Charisma and author of the new book, Trump and the 2020 Election, from which this column was excerpted. The book will be released Jan. 14, 2020, but you can order it now on* .