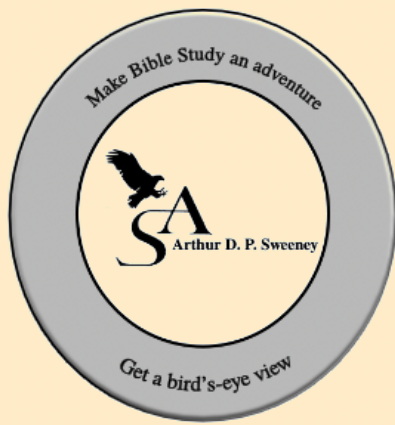




16



Part 1

Invisible wars, invisible forces, in invisible spaces

Scriptus Papers



Biblical perspectives on various topics

But God's people have invisible, impenetrable armour

Introduction

Scriptus means 'having been written', and this 16th *Scriptus Paper* is about "spiritual warfare". It's a prominent topic with many evangelicals, although the words "spiritual warfare" do not appear in most English Bible translations. So, what is "spiritual warfare", what does it look like, how would we know when we were in one, who are the combatants, and how should Christians conduct themselves? "Spiritual warfare" (SW for short) is a biblical concept, so we'll consider how it presents itself in the Hebrew Bible and then in the New Testament (NT), in the following ways:

1. The Concept of Spiritual Warfare
2. The Combatants of Spiritual Warfare
3. The Conduct of Spiritual Warfare

1. The concept of Spiritual War

Firstly, let me give you two definitions from Christians:

Spiritual warfare comprises actions, by the believer, against the demonic realm to secure and maintain the victory over Satan, and his kingdom, that Jesus won on the cross ([Don Ibbotson](#)).

Spiritual warfare is the leveraging of everything that God promises against everything that opposes God's purposes ([Drew Larson](#)).

The first definition is somewhat narrow, and the second too broad. Indeed, I find that there's no better way to understand a concept than to see it illustrated in action. For this purpose, I'm going to the book of Daniel, where we find the Jewish man in Babylon. Why, might we ask, is he some 1500kms from home? Well, he's certainly not there as a tourist, but as an exile. The exile of the Israelites from their lands occurred in several distinct stages, driven by the Assyrian, and Babylonian, empires, as part of a cycle of disobedience, conquest, and captivity.

Firstly, the Assyrian Exile of the Northern Kingdom (8th Century BC, 2 Kings 16-17) began about 733 BC until 722 BC. Known as the "ten lost tribes," they vanished and were lost to Israel as a coherent national or religious entity.

Secondly, the Babylonian Exile of the Southern Kingdom (6th Century BC, 2 Kings 25), was in three distinct waves beginning about 605 BC until 586 BC. **Daniel** and his companions were taken hostage in 605, while the prophet Ezekiel, the nobility, and skilled craftsmen were taken in 587. Mass deportation occurred in 586 BC after the first Temple was destroyed.

In exile

In 539 B.C Medo-Persian forces, led by Cyrus the Great, captured Babylon (Daniel 5:25-28). Thus the mighty Babylonian empire, having lasted a mere 66 years, came to an abrupt end, and it was followed by the Persian empire that controlled much of the known world for 208 years.

Book of Daniel

It's literary structure is unique. Apart from chapter one, chapter's 2-6 were written in Aramaic, which was the language of the Babylonians, for which the visions and Daniel's interpretations of these chapters were for them. The Babylonian kings, Nebuchadnezzar, and his son Belshazzar, and Darius the Mede learned that the God of Daniel is the living God Who endures forever. Their kingdoms will be destroyed, but His kingdom will not - it is forever (Daniel 6:26). And, the same God preserves His people when living in these terrible kingdoms.

Chapter's 7-12 were written in Hebrew, which was the language of the Hebrews, and the four dreams and visions that Daniel saw comprised messages for Israel. In the first vision he saw the empires of this world, under which Israel would be subject, have their dominion taken away. In place of these Daniel saw One like a Son of Man coming with the clouds of heaven to the Ancient of Days, and to Him was given universal and everlasting dominion (Daniel 7).

Note: Headings in this menu are hyperlinks. Click on them and they will take you to the relevant page

Part 1:

[Invisible wars, forces, spaces, and armour](#)

[Spiritual War concept](#)

[Spiritual War combatants](#)

[Spiritual War conduct](#)

Part 2:

[How Satan waged war on the Saviour and Saints and lost](#)

[Spiritual War concept](#)

[Spiritual War combatants](#)

1. The Saviour

[From cradle to the cross](#)

[From cross to the crown](#)

2. The Saints

[Spiritual War conduct](#)

[The Army](#)

[The Armour](#)

[The Action](#)

[The Ambush](#)

[The Ambassador](#)

[Conclusion](#)

[References](#)

2/23

[Word meanings are taken from Abarim Publications](#)



Note: Headings in this menu are hyperlinks. Click on them and they will take you to the relevant page

Part 1:

[Invisible wars, forces, spaces, and armour](#)

[Spiritual War concept](#)

[Spiritual War combatants](#)

[Spiritual War conduct](#)

Part 2:

[How Satan waged war on the Saviour and Saints and lost](#)

[Spiritual War concept](#)

[Spiritual War combatants](#)

1. The Saviour

[From cradle to the cross](#)

[From cross to the crown](#)

2. The Saints

[Spiritual War conduct](#)

[The Army](#)

[The Armour](#)

[The Action](#)

[The Ambush](#)

[The Ambassador](#)

[Conclusion](#)

[References](#)

3/23

[Word meanings are taken from Abarim Publications](#)



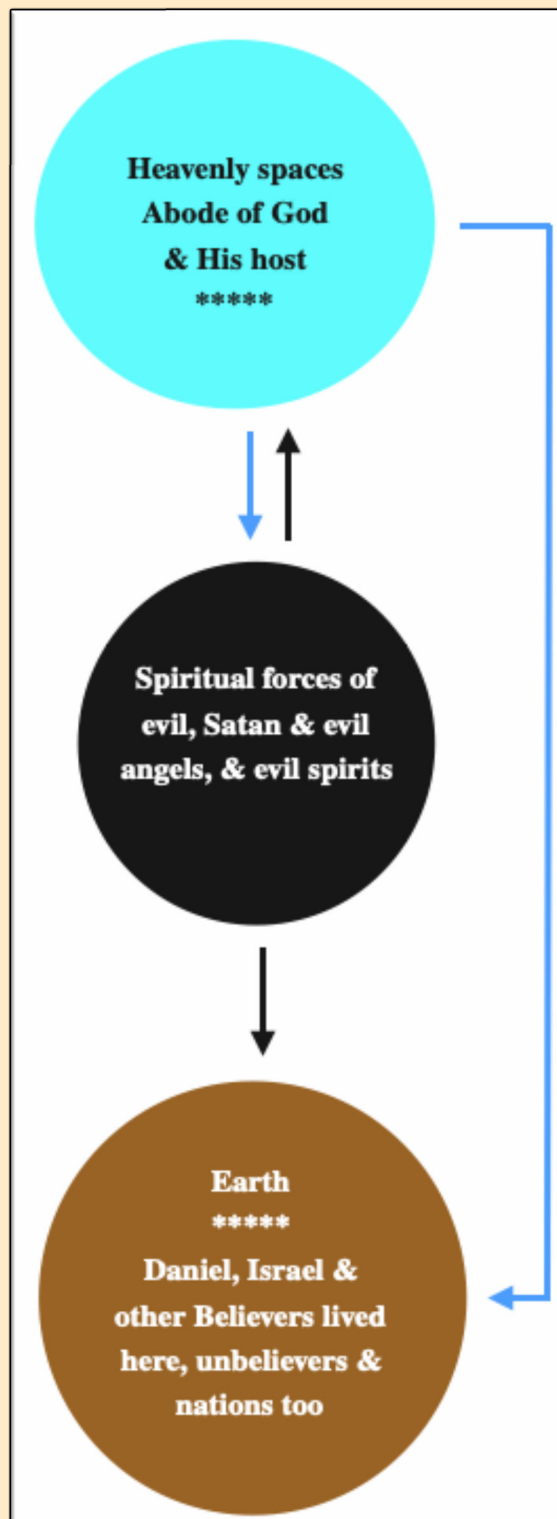
1. The concept of Spiritual War continued

In the second of these he saw the kingdom of Greece defeating the Medo-Persian kingdom, which would be hostile to God and His people, and trample His sanctuary. This kingdom shall be broken, but not by human hands (Daniel 8:1).

In the third vision Daniel saw for his people and his holy city, an end to sin, and a bringing in of everlasting righteousness. He also saw again the destruction of the city and the sanctuary (Daniel 9).

In the fourth and final vision, Daniel 10-12 provides us with the primary, detailed case study of spiritual warfare in the Bible. The curtain is opened to give us a rare behind-the-scenes glimpse into the invisible realm where spiritual forces, both good and evil, engage in conflict to influence earthly decision makers to mould the course of history to their will.

2. The Combatants of Spiritual War



God is the foremost combatant. He sent His angel to Daniel, and His angels contend with the evil spirits that influence the Persian, Greek and other nations. These nations in turn seek to influence Israel to behave in ways acceptable to them, and unacceptable to God, but God's angels seek to reverse that evil influence.

See the graphic at left, in which the good beings are represented in blue, the evil in black, and arrows indicate direction of influence.

1. God

In the third year of King Cyrus of Persia a **true word** (*dabar*) was revealed to Daniel, which concerned a **great war**. He understood **the word**, having received understanding in the vision (Daniel 10:1).

God's Timing. The revelation of God came to Daniel in the third year of King Cyrus of Persia. Cyrus, founder of the Persian Empire, came to the throne in 559 B.C. and reigned until his death in 530 B.C. In his first year Cyrus made a decree for Israel in exile to return to Jerusalem to rebuild the temple. In the second year, Israel laid the foundation of the temple, but shortly after, Israel faced strong opposition from their enemies and the rebuilding work stopped for 15-16 years (Ezra 4:1, 4-5, 24).

Things were going well for the weary exiles, and then they weren't. This means that the third year of Cyrus found the returned exiles discouraged, and wondering where God was when they needed His help. During this time, Daniel prayed for God to intervene so that rebuilding may continue. He did.

Note: Headings in this menu are hyperlinks. Click on them and they will take you to the relevant page

Part 1:

[Invisible wars, forces, spaces, and armour](#)

[Spiritual War concept](#)

[Spiritual War combatants](#)

[Spiritual War conduct](#)

Part 2:

[How Satan waged war on the Saviour and Saints and lost](#)

[Spiritual War concept](#)

[Spiritual War combatants](#)

1. The Saviour

[From cradle to the cross](#)

[From cross to the crown](#)

2. The Saints

[Spiritual War conduct](#)

[The Army](#)

[The Armour](#)

[The Action](#)

[The Ambush](#)

[The Ambassador](#)

[Conclusion](#)

[References](#)

4/23

[Word meanings are taken from Abarim Publications](#)



2. The Combatants continued

God's word. The Hebrew word (*dabar*) is alive and creative. *Dabar* is more than what is spoken—it carries power and brings things into reality. The Word here is not just communication; it is action. When God speaks, things happen. For example, when God said, “Let there be light,” light appeared (Genesis 1:3). God’s Word is not passive. It creates, guides, reveals God, and transforms reality. In Hebrew, (*dabar*) emphasises the Word’s power to act and transform history. Moreover, it is true, and trustworthy, and Daniel understood the revealed word of God given to him.

God's war. The revealed word of God was about a **great war**. God is the most important combatant in spiritual wars. He is the architect of them, manages them, and ends them. When Israel was caught up in these wars, their God provided protection.

2. The messenger

The second combatant in this war is the man from heaven that Daniel saw.

4 On the twenty-fourth day of the first month, as I was standing on the bank of the great river (that is, the Tigris), 5 I looked up and saw **a man** clothed in linen, with a belt of gold from Uphaz around his waist. 6 His body was like beryl, his face like lightning, his eyes like flaming torches, his arms and legs like the gleam of burnished bronze, and the sound of his words like the roar of a multitude.

7 I, Daniel, alone saw the vision; the people who were with me did not see the vision, though a great trembling fell upon them, and they fled and hid themselves. 8 So I was left alone to see this great vision. My strength left me, and my complexion grew deathly pale, and I retained no strength. 9 Then I heard the sound of his words; and when I heard the sound of his words, I fell into a trance, face to the ground.

10 But then a hand touched me and roused me to my hands and knees. 11 He said to me, “Daniel, greatly beloved, pay attention to the words that I am going to speak to you. Stand (*‘amad*) on your feet, for I have now been sent to you.” So while he was speaking this word to me, I stood up trembling. (Daniel 10:4-11).

While Daniel saw the unidentified man, the impact it had on him was beyond human expectation. Notably, it's similar to the experience of Ezekiel (Chapters 1-2), Saul of Tarsus (Acts 9, 22, 26), and John (Revelation 1), who were flat on their faces before the glory of God. We'll come back to this encounter on page 6. Daniel was told to stand (*‘amad*), which is to remain put in moments of fear, and uncertainty, when it would be easier to move on. Daniel, don't walk away just because you are afraid and uncomfortable. Take courage and endure, even though you don't know exactly what comes next.

3. Prince of Persia

The third combatant in this war is the prince of Persia.

But the **prince** (*sar*) of the kingdom of Persia opposed me twenty-one days. So **Michael, one of the chief princes** (*sar*), came to help me, and I left him there with the **kings** (*melek*) of Persia (Daniel 10:13).

Persia has both a prince and king. Conceptually, kings (*melek*) are different from princes (*sar*). *Melek* describes the king or supreme ruler. *Sar* mostly denotes a social structure's sub-chief, like a clan head (Numbers 21:18) or regional ruler (Judges 9:30). That is, *sar* ranks below *melek*.

On Daniel's theological level, the kings are earthly and tangible. The princes, however, are entirely heavenly and spiritual as is Michael. So, the prince (*sar*) of Persia, and the prince (*sar*) of Greece are "territorial spiritual entities" and, we might ask, who is their king (*melek*)? We'll have to come back to that later.

As [Keil and Delitzsch](#) suggest, the prince of Persia, the guardian spirit of the Persian kingdom, influenced the king of Persia to act against Israel. On the other hand, the angel that came in answer to Daniel's prayer, came to dislodge this prince from his position and deprive him of his influence. Nevertheless, Michael came to his help so that he could gain mastery over him, to influence the prince in favour of Israel. Michael is thus the angel possessing the unparalleled power of God, who contends for Israel and protects it from Gentile destruction.

Note: Headings in this menu are hyperlinks. Click on them and they will take you to the relevant page

Part 1:

[Invisible wars, forces, spaces, and armour](#)

[Spiritual War concept](#)

[Spiritual War combatants](#)

[Spiritual War conduct](#)

Part 2:

[How Satan waged war on the Saviour and Saints and lost](#)

[Spiritual War concept](#)

[Spiritual War combatants](#)

1. The Saviour

[From cradle to the cross](#)

[From cross to the crown](#)

2. The Saints

[Spiritual War conduct](#)

[The Army](#)

[The Armour](#)

[The Action](#)

[The Ambush](#)

[The Ambassador](#)

[Conclusion](#)

[References](#)

5/23

[Word meanings are taken from Abarim Publications](#)



4. Prince of Greece

The fourth combatant in this war is the prince of Greece.

Then he said...Now I must return to fight against the **prince (sar) of Persia**, and when I am through with him, the **prince (sar) of Greece** will come (Daniel 10:20).

When the angelic visitor to Daniel completed his message he returned **to fight** against the prince until the Persian kingdom had fallen and the prince of the Grecian people came, compelling him to enter on a **new war**, also helped by Michael. He possesses the unparalleled power of God and as Israel's prince stands up for his people, and over them to protect them (12:1). How did the prince of the kingdom of Persia make his hostility to God and His people Israel tangible on the ground so that the returned exiles experienced it? Look at these texts.

1 Now when the **adversaries** of Judah and Benjamin heard that the returned exiles were building a temple to the Lord, the God of Israel, they prevented the building of the temple till the reign of Darius (Ezra 4:1-2).

How did they do this? By deception. The adversaries expressed a desire to help in the work of rebuilding because like them, they sacrificed to the God of Israel. The lie was that they were from Cuthah, Ava, Hamath, and Sepharvaim, whom the king of Assyria had settled in Benjamin and Judah, taking possession of the depopulated areas of the Israelites, and dwelt therein (2 Kings 17:24).

3 The chiefs of Israel answered, "It is not for you and for us to build a house to our God".

4 Then the people of the land **weakened** the hands of the people of Judah and made them **afraid** to build 5 and **bribed** counsellors against them to **frustrate** their purpose, all the days of Cyrus king of Persia, even until the reign of Darius king of Persia. 24 Then the work on the house of God that is in Jerusalem **stopped**, and it **ceased** until the second year of the reign of Darius king of Persia (Ezra 4:3-5, 24).

The exiles were weakened and the rebuilding stopped for 15-16 years. That was how the prince of the kingdom of Persia made his hostility to God and His people Israel effective ([Keil and Delitzsch](#)).

For the future, Daniel 11 foretells of warfare between Persia and Greece, and between the king of the South (Egypt), and the king of the north, which was a series of Greek kings in Syria of the Seleucid dynasty. The series of Egyptian kings of the Ptolemaic dynasty is the king of the South.

God's people will not elude these wars, with devastating consequences (Daniel 11:16, 28-36, 41, 45). Further, when you read that one of the kings of the north "**shall deal with the strongest fortresses by the help of a foreign god**", you recognise an evil, invisible supernatural spiritual power standing behind the national god, influencing this king against God's people Israel (11:39).

Nevertheless, God's hand is visible in all of this horror. Kings may plot and plan but their success, failure, and timing are determined by God. For example, evil shall not succeed (11:27), and the king shall prosper until what is determined shall be done (11:36). Finally, God has appointed His time for these events (10:13, 11:27, 35, 12:4, 13). So, this brings us back to the start at 10:1. God is the most important combatant in spiritual wars. He is the architect of them, manages them, and ends them.

5. Michael

The fifth combatant in this war is **Michael**, (means What's God Like?), one of the chief princes, first, in place, time or rank responsible to God, and Israel's protector in particular.

13 But the **prince (sar) of the kingdom of Persia** opposed me twenty-one days. So **Michael, one of the chief princes (sar)**, came to help me, and I left him there with the **kings (melek) of Persia**...

21 There is no one who strengthens me against these except **Michael, your prince**.

12:1 At that time **Michael**, the **great prince** who stands guard over your people will stand up...at that time your people will be delivered (Daniel 10:13-14, 21, 12:1).

Israel's great prince Michael is one of God's resources who strengthens other angels in their service of God and His people and defeats the evil angels.

Note: Headings in this menu are hyperlinks. Click on them and they will take you to the relevant page

Part 1:

[Invisible wars, forces, spaces, and armour](#)

[Spiritual War concept](#)

[Spiritual War combatants](#)

[Spiritual War conduct](#)

Part 2:

[How Satan waged war on the Saviour and Saints and lost](#)

[Spiritual War concept](#)

[Spiritual War combatants](#)

1. The Saviour

[From cradle to the cross](#)

[From cross to the crown](#)

2. The Saints

[Spiritual War conduct](#)

[The Army](#)

[The Armour](#)

[The Action](#)

[The Ambush](#)

[The Ambassador](#)

[Conclusion](#)

[References](#)

6/23

[Word meanings are taken from Abarim Publications](#)



6. Daniel

The sixth combatant in this war is Daniel.

2 At that time I, Daniel, had been mourning for three weeks. 3 I had eaten no rich food, no meat or wine had entered my mouth, and I had not anointed myself at all, for the full **three weeks** (Daniel 10:2-3).

10 But then a hand touched me and roused me to my hands and knees. 11 He said to me, “Daniel, greatly beloved, pay attention to **my words** that I am going to speak to you. Stand on your feet, for I have now been sent to you.” So while he was speaking this word to me, I stood up trembling.

12 He said to me, “Do not fear, Daniel, for from the first day that you set your mind to gain understanding and to humble yourself before your God, **your words** have been heard, and I have come because of your words. But the prince of the kingdom of Persia opposed me **twenty-one days**.

14 I came to help you understand what is to happen to your people at the end of days. For there is a further vision for those days. (Daniel 10:10-12, 14).

20 Then he said, “Do you know why I have come to you? 21 I will tell you what is inscribed in the book of truth (Daniel 10:20-21).

It may seem strange that I regard Daniel as a combatant in this war. Firstly, notice the parallels between Daniel and the angelic messenger. There is a symmetry in time, as three weeks and 21 one days are the same, and communication, the angel's words are a response to Daniel's words (10:12). Those words are not articulated by the angel, but given that the third year of Cyrus found the returned exiles discouraged, and wondering where God was when they needed His help, Daniel's words were probably an intercessory prayer on behalf of his discouraged fellow Jews. The table illustrates the symmetry.

Item	Daniel	Angelic messenger
Time	3 weeks	21 days
Words	Your words have been heard (10:12)	Pay attention to my words (10:11)

The angelic messenger to Daniel said that he had a message for him and his people because of his words, which is detailed in chapters 11-12. Particularly:

13 I have come to help you understand what is to happen to your people at the end of days.

14 For there is a further vision for those days.

21 But I am to tell you what is inscribed in the book of truth (Daniel 10:13-14, 21).

The angel's words were not his, but he relays what's inscribed in God's book of truth. "Truth" (*ʾemeth*), conveys the idea of building up, and stability, as would a parent or nurse. Further, God's words were inscribed on His records just as the irrevocable decree by King Darius was signed (6:8–13:), and the "writing on the wall" was irrevocable (5:24, 25).

Note: Headings in this menu are hyperlinks. Click on them and they will take you to the relevant page

Part 1:

[Invisible wars, forces, spaces, and armour](#)

[Spiritual War concept](#)

[Spiritual War combatants](#)

[Spiritual War conduct](#)

Part 2:

[How Satan waged war on the Saviour and Saints and lost](#)

[Spiritual War concept](#)

[Spiritual War combatants](#)

[1. The Saviour](#)

[From cradle to the cross](#)

[From cross to the crown](#)

[2. The Saints](#)

[Spiritual War conduct](#)

[The Army](#)

[The Armour](#)

[The Action](#)

[The Ambush](#)

[The Ambassador](#)

[Conclusion](#)

[References](#)

7/23

[Word meanings are taken from Abarim Publications](#)



3. The conduct of Spiritual War

Summary

What have we learnt so far about the concept, the combatants, and the conduct of spiritual warfare?

Evil spirits and nations

The prince of the kingdom of Persia, the evil guardian spirit of the Persian kingdom, influenced the political and social affairs of the Persian nation, by mobilising adversaries of the returned Jewish exiles and prevented them from rebuilding the temple.

Daniel

This led Daniel to mourn this national tragedy so much that he couldn't eat or drink or engage in his normal cultural practices for three weeks. During this time he spoke to God about it, but did not engage directly with these evil spiritual forces.

God

God responded by dispatching His own messenger to defeat the opposition so that rebuilding could recommence. In addition, Michael the chief prince came to his help so that he could gain mastery over the evil prince to influence the prince in favour of Israel. After 15-16 years the rebuilding commenced.

Christian views

Spiritual warfare comprises actions, by the believer, against the demonic realm to secure and maintain the victory over Satan, and his kingdom, that Jesus won on the cross (Don Ibbotson).

He acknowledges the victory over Satan at the cross. That's true and vitally important. However, the lack of reference to God and His word is a deficiency I think given what we see from the book of Daniel. Secondly, the role of the believer is overplayed and unbiblical, I think. To assert that the action of the believer is to "secure and maintain" the victory over Satan that Jesus won is entirely unconvincing. So, the victory of Jesus needs securing! If He didn't secure it then I sure can't. Jesus doesn't need my help, as John 12:31 and Ephesians 1:20-22 make clear.

Now, what about Larson's definition:

Spiritual warfare is the leveraging of everything that God promises against everything that opposes God's purposes.

This is true in the aggregate but tells us nothing specific.

Certainly, the warfare that we have just considered took place among invisible forces in invisible spaces, but its effects were rather visible, and tangible on the earth. Further, God's people have invisible, impenetrable armour. Given this background, let's now turn to spiritual warfare in the NT.

Note: Headings in this menu are hyperlinks. Click on them and they will take you to the relevant page

Part 1:

[Invisible wars, forces, spaces, and armour](#)

[Spiritual War concept](#)

[Spiritual War combatants](#)

[Spiritual War conduct](#)

Part 2:

[How Satan waged war on the Saviour and Saints and lost](#)

[Spiritual War concept](#)

[Spiritual War combatants](#)

1. The Saviour

[From cradle to the cross](#)

[From cross to the crown](#)

2. The Saints

[Spiritual War conduct](#)

[The Army](#)

[The Armour](#)

[The Action](#)

[The Ambush](#)

[The Ambassador](#)

[Conclusion](#)

[References](#)

8/23

[Word meanings are taken from Abarim Publications](#)



Part 2

**How Satan waged war on the Saviour and saints
...and LOST!**



From the cradle to the cross to the crown
The Army, the Action, the Armour, the Ambush, the Ambassador

Note: Headings in this menu are hyperlinks. Click on them and they will take you to the relevant page

Part 1:

[Invisible wars, forces, spaces, and armour](#)

[Spiritual War concept](#)

[Spiritual War combatants](#)

[Spiritual War conduct](#)

Part 2:

[How Satan waged war on the Saviour and Saints and lost](#)

[Spiritual War concept](#)

[Spiritual War combatants](#)

1. The Saviour

[From cradle to the cross](#)

[From cross to the crown](#)

2. The Saints

[Spiritual War conduct](#)

[The Army](#)

[The Armour](#)

[The Action](#)

[The Ambush](#)

[The Ambassador](#)

[Conclusion](#)

[References](#)

9/23

[Word meanings are taken from Abarim Publications](#)



Introduction

In this Part 2, we'll consider the NT teaching on SW; its concept, combatants and conduct.

1. The Concept of Spiritual Warfare

Like the graphic illustrating spiritual warfare in the Hebrew Bible, the graphic below shows spiritual warfare in the NT, which enlarges on what we have seen before. Briefly, what we will find ahead is God using all of His spiritual resources to protect and ensure victory for His Saints. Those same resources will contend with and influence Satan, his angels and evil spirits who influence unbelievers, who in turn try to influence the Saints in the wrong way.



2. The Combatants of Spiritual Warfare

The graphic shows there are five major combatants in this war. Firstly, the Son of God came to do battle with the "ruler of this world" and defeat him (John 12:31, Hebrews 2:14-18; 1 John 3:8). Secondly, our Lord Jesus prays for us as ones who are in the world but not of it, that God would keep us from the Evil One (John 17:11-15). So, both the Saviour and the Saints are involved in this war. Firstly, let's consider the Saviour.

1. The Saviour

From the cradle to the cross

The dragon

The text below depicts three main characters: a woman, a dragon and a child as two portents or signs. So, we should think symbolic here.

1 A great portent (*semeion*) appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars. 2 She was pregnant and was crying out in birth pangs, in the agony of giving birth. 3 Then another portent appeared in heaven: **a great fiery red dragon** (*drakon*), with seven heads and ten horns, and seven diadems on his heads. 4 His tail swept down a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth. **Then the dragon stood before the woman** who was about to bear a child, so that he might devour her child as soon as it was born. And she gave birth to a son, a male child, who is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron (Revelation 12:1-5).

Note: Headings in this menu are hyperlinks. Click on them and they will take you to the relevant page

Part 1:

[Invisible wars, forces, spaces, and armour](#)

[Spiritual War concept](#)

[Spiritual War combatants](#)

[Spiritual War conduct](#)

Part 2:

[How Satan waged war on the Saviour and Saints and lost](#)

[Spiritual War concept](#)

[Spiritual War combatants](#)

1. The Saviour

[From cradle to the cross](#)

[From cross to the crown](#)

2. The Saints

[Spiritual War conduct](#)

[The Army](#)

[The Armour](#)

[The Action](#)

[The Ambush](#)

[The Ambassador](#)

[Conclusion](#)

[References](#)

10/23

[Word meanings are taken from Abarim Publications](#)



1. The Saviour continued

Firstly, the woman as a portent. The combination of sun, moon and stars applied to man is only found in Genesis 37:9. There, the sun symbolises Jacob, the moon his wife and the twelve stars his sons. For John, the picture is similar but is applied more broadly, for the woman represents God's chosen people Israel, and the 12 stars the offspring.



The woman's sun clothing echoes another familiar text, namely, 'then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father' (Matthew 13:43). Parallel with Jacob's wife, the moon may represent the bride of Christ. The crown demonstrates that she rules. The twelve stars on the crown represent her offspring in the form of the twelve tribes of Israel, and also the twelve apostles of the NT church. The rule of God's chosen people is in perfect contrast to the rule of the dragon symbolised by the seven heads, ten horns and seven diadems (Revelation 12:3).

The dragon is a portent too, a sign (*semeion*) a word that could mean anything from a marker on a border, grave or monument to a signalling flag in battle, a figurehead on shields, even a password or secret handshake. Even the medical profession used *semeion* to describe representative symptoms of a certain disease. The shorter version of the word (*sema*), in particular was also used in the sense of a "sign from heaven" or omen.

Dragon (*drakon*) means snake, particularly a very large one, and literally means "the one that sees" ([Abarim Publications](#)). Its colour is fiery red, which is the most visceral color in the spectrum. An animal with red colouring is often a warning to stay away. The fiery serpents (the burning ones) of Numbers 21:6 inflicted a "burning" sensation from the inflammation of a venomous bite. These red snakes represented the painful consequence of rebellion against God.

The dragon's armies

His armies comprise:

The Commander in Chief. The dragon is the commander in chief. He is defined as "the serpent of old, who is the devil and Satan" (Revelation 20:2).

The commanders. These are the **one third of the stars** that participated in the dragon's revolt described in 12:3 above. As John refers to the dragon's angels engaging in war with him (Revelation 12:7), then one third of the stars symbolises them. 'Angel' (*aggelos*) means messenger, emissary or envoy; someone who or something that carries a message or charge, without further specification as to what kind of being is doing the messaging. As the dragon persuaded these angels from heaven to throw their lot in with him, they are, no doubt, heavenly, spirit beings. They seem to be the dragon's commanders. Both the general and the commanders are spirit beings from heaven.

The foot soldiers. These are earthly beings. They include the **seven heads** which represent kings and kingdoms or empires (17:9, 12, Daniel 7:24). Further, the **ten horns** symbolise kings (17:12). Finally, the **seven diadems** (*diadema*), meaning "a binding through and through" refers to legislative power. Similarly, Christ is crowned with not 10, but unlimited diadems (19:12). In antiquity, the diadem was a headdress in the nature of a turban or piece of cloth wrapped or twisted about the head and tied behind. Its color was generally white, sometimes, however, it was of blue, like that of Darius; and it was sown with pearls or other gems, (Zechariah 9:16) and enriched with gold (Revelation 9:7) It was peculiarly the mark of Oriental sovereigns. See the image of a Greco-Roman diadem here.



Note: Headings in this menu are hyperlinks. Click on them and they will take you to the relevant page

Part 1:

[Invisible wars, forces, spaces, and armour](#)

[Spiritual War concept](#)

[Spiritual War combatants](#)

[Spiritual War conduct](#)

Part 2:

[How Satan waged war on the Saviour and Saints and lost](#)

[Spiritual War concept](#)

[Spiritual War combatants](#)

[1. The Saviour](#)

[From cradle to the cross](#)

[From cross to the crown](#)

[2. The Saints](#)

[Spiritual War conduct](#)

[The Army](#)

[The Armour](#)

[The Action](#)

[The Ambush](#)

[The Ambassador](#)

[Conclusion](#)

[References](#)

11/23

[Word meanings are taken from Abarim Publications](#)



Herod a foot soldier. Which brings us to Matthew, who doesn't mention that Satan inspired

Herod to kill the infant Jesus, but John has already told us that the dragon (Satan) sought to kill Him at birth (Revelation 12:1-4). King Herod was Herod the Great, who ruled Judea from 37 B.C. until he died in 4 B.C. Like the Serpent in Eden, he deceptively tried to trap the infant Jesus by feigning worship of Him.

Jesus was protected by an angel of the Lord who appeared to Joseph in a dream and instructed him to take his family to safety in Egypt until he returned with another message. After Herod died, that angel of the Lord instructed Joseph to take the child and his mother back to the land of Israel, for it was safe to do so. The identity of this protecting angel is not revealed, but I wonder if it was Michael the protector of Israel.

Satan's direct attack

1 Then Jesus was **led up by the Spirit** into the wilderness to be tempted by the **devil**. 2 He fasted forty days and forty nights, and afterwards he was famished. 3 The **tempter** came and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread." 4 But he answered, "It is written, 'One does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.'" 5 Then the **devil** took him to the holy city and placed him on the pinnacle of the temple, 6 saying to him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down; for it is written, 'He will command his angels concerning you,' and 'On their hands they will bear you up, so that you will not dash your foot against a stone.'" 7 Jesus said to him, "Again it is written, 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'" 8 Again, the **devil** took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendour; 9 and he said to him, "All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me." 10 Jesus said to him, "Away with you, **Satan!** for it is written, 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve only him.'" 11 Then the **devil** left him, and suddenly angels came and waited on him (Matthew 4:1-11).

Satan failed to kill Jesus by his proxy Herod, so now he resorts to the direct approach.

The first thing to notice is that the Spirit instigated this temptation. The Spirit brought Him into the desert. The action is passive, which indicates that Jesus received the action instead of taking the journey on His own initiative. Like Job's case, Satan can only do what he wants when God gives him the opportunity.

Matthew employs three descriptors of the adversary; devil (x3), tempter, and satan. Devil (*diabolos*), means the slanderous, backbiting one. The tempter (*peirazo*), means the probing one. This word forms one of the main attributes of the scientific method, namely that of an experimental examination of any proposed hypothesis. Satan (*satanas*) means adversary, opposition, resistance. The three descriptors are negative and add up to a slanderous, tempting, adversary. He opposes Jesus, and refuses to accept His supremacy and resists His claims.

Note: Headings in this menu are hyperlinks. Click on them and they will take you to the relevant page

Part 1:

[Invisible wars, forces, spaces, and armour](#)

[Spiritual War concept](#)

[Spiritual War combatants](#)

[Spiritual War conduct](#)

Part 2:

[How Satan waged war on the Saviour and Saints and lost](#)

[Spiritual War concept](#)

[Spiritual War combatants](#)

1. The Saviour

[From cradle to the cross](#)

[From cross to the crown](#)

2. The Saints

[Spiritual War conduct](#)

[The Army](#)

[The Armour](#)

[The Action](#)

[The Ambush](#)

[The Ambassador](#)

[Conclusion](#)

[References](#)

12/23

[Word meanings are taken from Abarim Publications](#)



To the Cross

31 Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be driven out. 32 And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself.” 33 He said this to indicate **the kind of death** he was to die (John 12:31-33).

14 Since, therefore, the children share flesh and blood, he himself likewise shared the same things, so that **through death** he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, 15 and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by the fear of death. 16 For it is clear that he did not come to help angels, but the descendants of Abraham. 17 Therefore he had to become like his brothers and sisters in every respect, so that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make **a sacrifice of atonement** for the sins of the people. 18 Because he himself was tested by what he suffered, he is able to help those who are being tested (Hebrews 2:14-18).

Everyone who commits sin is a child of the devil; for the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The Son of God was revealed **for this purpose**, to destroy the works of the devil (1 John 3:8).

In verse 31 in the text box, "Now is" refers to the present time when the Lord was speaking, and specifically His "hour" (12:27). "Judgment" means assessment, to discern or discriminate. In English, judgment implies the finding of fault and sending the bearer away; but in Greek, it implies the finding of a quality that is shared with the bearer. The Lord is assessing the ruler of this world to see if he has any qualities that are shared with the Lord Himself.

"This world". "World" (*kosmos*) means order, and that mostly of the civilised, governed and cultured human world. It does not denote the planet, or anything physical but rather the elements of human order that define humanity. "Ruler of this world" (*archon*), means a chief, magistrate or prince.

"Now, the ruler will be driven out" (*ekballo*), means to cast out or throw out. Interestingly, "now" is present but "will be thrown out" is future tense. This tension between present and future may be explained, because His "hour", His death (12:32-33) is the basis on which the ruler will be cast out. But thrown out of what? Satan has already been thrown out of heaven to the earth (Revelation 12:9), and in the future he will be thrown out of the earth into the lake of fire (Revelation 20:10).

In the Hebrews text below, Jesus in His incarnation and death has rendered without effect him who had the power over death. Further, the Son of God came into the world to disintegrate the sinning works of the devil. So, Jesus in His earthly life and death has found to have nothing in common with the Evil One, and on that foundation, his works are destroyed and he will be banished from the earth, as he was from heaven. Also, Colossians 2:15 says that *Having laid aside the rulers and authorities, he has made a public disgrace of them, triumphing over them by the cross.*

Note: Headings in this menu are hyperlinks. Click on them and they will take you to the relevant page

Part 1:

[Invisible wars, forces, spaces, and armour](#)

[Spiritual War concept](#)

[Spiritual War combatants](#)

[Spiritual War conduct](#)

Part 2:

[How Satan waged war on the Saviour and Saints and lost](#)

[Spiritual War concept](#)

[Spiritual War combatants](#)

1. The Saviour

[From cradle to the cross](#)

[From cross to the crown](#)

2. The Saints

[Spiritual War conduct](#)

[The Army](#)

[The Armour](#)

[The Action](#)

[The Ambush](#)

[The Ambassador](#)

[Conclusion](#)

[References](#)

13/23

[Word meanings are taken from Abarim Publications](#)



From the cross to the crown

4 The dragon stood before the woman who was about to bear a child, so that he might devour her child as soon as it was born. 5 And she gave birth to a son, a male child, who is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron. But her child was snatched away and taken to God and to his throne.

7 And war broke out in heaven; Michael and his angels fought against the dragon. The dragon and his angels fought back, 8 but they were defeated, and there was no longer any place for them in heaven. 9 The great dragon was thrown down, that ancient serpent, who is called the Devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world—he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him.

10 Then I heard a loud voice in heaven, proclaiming, “Now have come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of his Messiah, for the accuser of our comrades has been thrown down, who accuses them day and night before our God. 11 But they have conquered him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, for they did not cling to life even in the face of death. 12 Rejoice then, you heavens and those who dwell in them! But woe to the earth and the sea, for the devil has come down to you with great wrath, because he knows that his time is short!” (Revelation 12:4-12).

See the text here.

Jesus is clearly the child alluded to in the following texts:

Ask of me, and I will make the nations your heritage, and the ends of the earth your possession.

You shall break them with a rod of iron, and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel (Psalm 2:8-9).

To everyone who conquers and continues to do my works to the end, I will give authority over the nations; to rule them with an iron rod, as when clay pots are shattered (Revelation 2:26-27).

Further, the child snatched away and taken to God and to His throne is the ascension of Christ following His resurrection. Now the exalted Christ is crowned, and then war breaks out in heaven. This is the dragon's plan B. He could not kill Christ at His birth, so now tries to do it after His ascension. Notably, the Lord didn't engage in a war with him, but just gave the task to Michael and his angels, who defeated the dragon and threw him out of heaven.

It is as Paul prays to the Father for His saints:

Let them see the full extent of Your power that is at work in those of us who believe, and may it be done according to Your might and power. Friends, it is this same might and resurrection power that He used in the Anointed One to raise Him from the dead and to position Him at His right hand in heaven. **There is nothing over Him.** He's above all rule, authority, power, and dominion; over every name invoked, over every title bestowed in this age and the next. **God has placed all things beneath His feet** (Ephesians 1:19-22: The Voice).

Note: Headings in this menu are hyperlinks. Click on them and they will take you to the relevant page

Part 1:

[Invisible wars, forces, spaces, and armour](#)

[Spiritual War concept](#)

[Spiritual War combatants](#)

[Spiritual War conduct](#)

Part 2:

[How Satan waged war on the Saviour and Saints and lost](#)

[Spiritual War concept](#)

[Spiritual War combatants](#)

[1. The Saviour](#)

[From cradle to the cross](#)

[From cross to the crown](#)

[2. The Saints](#)

[Spiritual War conduct](#)

[The Army](#)

[The Armour](#)

[The Action](#)

[The Ambush](#)

[The Ambassador](#)

[Conclusion](#)

[References](#)

14/23

[Word meanings are taken from Abarim Publications](#)



2. The Saints

Having considered how the Saviour engaged in spiritual warfare, it's now time to consider the Christian soldier's warfare. Our first text in focus is Ephesians 6.

10 Finally, **be strong** in the Lord and in the strength of his power.

11 **Put on** the whole armor of God, so that **you** may be able **to stand** against **the wiles of the devil**.

12 For **our struggle** is not against enemies of blood and flesh, but against **the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers of this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places**.

13 Therefore **take up** the whole *armor of God*, so that **you** may be able to **withstand** on that evil day, and having done everything, to **stand** firm.

14 **Stand** therefore, and **fasten the belt of truth** around your waist, and **put on the breastplate of righteousness**.

15 As *shoes* for **your** feet **put on** whatever will make **you** ready to proclaim the gospel of peace.

16 With all of these, **take the shield of faith**, with which **you** will be able to **quench** all **the flaming arrows of the evil one**.

17 **Take the helmet of salvation**, and *the sword of the Spirit*, which is *the word of God*.

18 **Pray** in the Spirit at all times in every prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert and always persevere in supplication for all the **saints**.

19 **Pray** also for me, so that when I speak, a message may be given to me to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel,

20 for which I am an **ambassador** in chains. **Pray** that I may declare it boldly, as I must speak.

21 So that **you** also may know how **I** am and what **I** am doing, Tychicus will tell **you** everything. He is a dear brother and a faithful minister in the Lord.

22 **I** am sending him to **you** for this very purpose, to let **you** know how **we** are, and to encourage **your** hearts.

23 Peace be to **the whole community**, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

24 Grace be with all who have an undying love for our Lord Jesus Christ (Ephesians 6:10-24).

This text gives us five categories to examine: The Army (blue), the Armour (black), the Action (green), the Ambush (red), and the Ambassador (blue).

3. The Conduct of Spiritual Warfare: The Army (blue)

Paul addresses the Ephesians Christians as a collective, the saints (v18, 23), people who share a common origin. Further, he includes himself in this army (v12 'our'; v22 'we'). Moreover, all the references to 'you' and 'your' are plural. So, Christian warfare is a collective endeavour. Moreover, he sends Tychicus to them that he might call their hearts closer to each other (v22). An army of soldiers has to be unified and work harmoniously together to be effective.

Note: Headings in this menu are hyperlinks. Click on them and they will take you to the relevant page

Part 1:

[Invisible wars, forces, spaces, and armour](#)

[Spiritual War concept](#)

[Spiritual War combatants](#)

[Spiritual War conduct](#)

Part 2:

[How Satan waged war on the Saviour and Saints and lost](#)

[Spiritual War concept](#)

[Spiritual War combatants](#)

1. The Saviour

[From cradle to the cross](#)

[From cross to the crown](#)

2. The Saints

[Spiritual War conduct](#)

[The Army](#)

[The Armour](#)

[The Action](#)

[The Ambush](#)

[The Ambassador](#)

[Conclusion](#)

[References](#)

15/23

[Word meanings are taken from Abarim Publications](#)



The Armour (black)

The Godhead

Apparently, Greek soldiers supplied their own armour ([Blümner](#)). In contrast, available to the Christian soldier are the full armour resources of the Godhead: the Lord (v10, 21, 23-24), God (v11, 13, 17, 23), and the Spirit (v17-18). This confirms what we found in the case study of Daniel.

As Paul wrote: *the armoury of our warfare is not fleshly (sarx), but mighty to God to the pulling down of strong holds* (2 Corinthians 10:4-5).

In the NT, (*sarx*) almost exclusively refers to "mental flesh." We feel and sense the world with our flesh, absorbing and storing information with it. This excludes human strategies and tactics for war. It takes God and His weapons to pull down fortresses and prisons.

The girdle of truth

The first item that had to be put on was the girdle of truth. Most outfits in antiquity involved belts and girdle. Specifically it was used to describe soldiers who would strap on their swords for war. As such the word denotes getting ready for action, which is how Paul spoke of loins girded with the truth (Ephesians 6:14, see Isaiah 11:5 and 59:17). The soldier is to be girded all around the lower back and belly, protected from all perspectives and angles and ready for action.

The noun (*osphus*) means "loin" and, judging from its contexts in the classics, denotes the area of the lower back and belly, including the reproductive organs (Hebrews 7:10). Since the lower belly was the seat of one's basest emotions, the loins were to be guarded for a wide range of reasons.

Jesus said: "keep your loins girded and your lamps lit" (Luke 12:35), which not only means "keep your pants on and your eyes open" but also "keep your lower emotions in check and your rational mind informed." The Hebrew word for loins (*kesel*), also means stupidity or misplaced confidence. The loftier counterpart of the (*osphus*) was the (*thorax*), the upper body. Also, Paul spoke of loins girded with the truth, which also refers to the sword or utility knife that people like fishermen, butchers and soldiers commonly carried on their hip. Peter spoke of the "loins of the mind" (1 Peter 1:13), which is not a great leap from "circumcision of the heart" (Deuteronomy 10:16, Romans 2:29).

The chest armour of righteousness

The chest armor (*thorax*) means the upper torso of man, and specifically, any kind of clothing that wraps and protects the torso, from a corselet to a short jacket and ultimately a piece of metal armor: a coat of mail, a wearable metal shield. This word is often translated with breastplate, but it should be noted that it mostly refers to a so-called cuirass, a front-and-back metal jacket that shields the entire upper body from attacks from all sides. In a figurative sense, the (*thorax*) is associated with one's breathing, spirit and reason. Here, Paul paraphrases Isaiah 59:17, and uses (*thorax*) to translate Isaiah's (*shiryon*):

He put on righteousness like a breastplate, (shiryon)...

Shoeing the feet

The nature of the footwear is not described, but the feet had to be ready to spread the good news of the peace. 'Readiness' means that saints will have considered and answered such basic questions as: Where does the gospel come from? How does the gospel relate to observable reality? Which measurable physical principles underpin the gospel? How might a poorly informed, intellectually challenged, superstitious or biased person confuse the gospel with any mythology or religion, and how can it be shown that the gospel has nothing to do with all that?

In a time of war, God has entrusted us with the good news of peace. As Christ entered the world, God's message was for peace among those with whom he is pleased (Luke 2:14). As He was leaving Christ left His peace with His disciples (John 14:27). Peace is not for His enemies, but for His people.

Note: Headings in this menu are hyperlinks. Click on them and they will take you to the relevant page

Part 1:

[Invisible wars, forces, spaces, and armour](#)

[Spiritual War concept](#)

[Spiritual War combatants](#)

[Spiritual War conduct](#)

Part 2:

[How Satan waged war on the Saviour and Saints and lost](#)

[Spiritual War concept](#)

[Spiritual War combatants](#)

1. The Saviour

[From cradle to the cross](#)

[From cross to the crown](#)

2. The Saints

[Spiritual War conduct](#)

[The Army](#)

[The Armour](#)

[The Action](#)

[The Ambush](#)

[The Ambassador](#)

[Conclusion](#)

[References](#)

16/23

[Word meanings are taken from Abarim Publications](#)

The shield

The door-sized shield of faith (*thureos*), was literally a door stop that would keep the door from opening and thus prevent undesired traffic between the outside world and the inside. In later Greek this noun came to describe the kind of long, half-cylindrical door-like shield of the Romans (who called it a *scutum*), and that's probably the meaning Paul employed in Ephesians 6:16 (See picture at right).

Crucially in this context, the traditional round shield had become replaced by the *scutum* when the Roman army no longer fought traditionally, in an every-man-for-himself sort of way, but as interlocked handfuls of soldiers. Paul's famous "shield of faith" is not the attribute of the lone warier, but one of a disciplined and well-trained formation.

It's called the shield of faith (from the Latin *fides*, meaning trust or confidence). Paul used (*pistis*), that referred to the mental substance that results from intelligent and reasonable inquiry or instruction. It is the mind's response to valuable information, and described sureness and certainty in every way. The soldier had to be confident that his shield would protect him, and as the picture shows it covers most of his body.

The shield had to quench (*sbennumi*) or extinguish whatever was thrown at it. In the classics this would described how liquids dried up, inflamed boils calmed down and went away, winds died down, men died out or their charm withered.

The head wrap

The head wrap (*perikephalaia*), from *peri* (around) and *kephale* (head), hence "encirclement of the head", was often used by soldiers as protective headgear as in the picture at right, wrapping the soldier's whole head and face in a protective covering.

In what sense is it the 'helmet of salvation'? After all, 'salvation' here is an adjective, so what noun does it describe? None. So, the adjective in this case may function as a noun, like the effect of salvation such as security, abundance, and health. This would give us *the secure head wrap*, for example ([Blumner](#)). The soldier is secure about his salvation, such assurance he receives from God, and is not self-generated.

The knife

The noun knife (*machaira*) denotes a large knife, dagger or scissors, and its verbal form means to wrestle or fight, which fits the context of close combat. The (*machaira*) was a relatively small handheld cutting tool, and not particularly a military weapon that a soldier would wield in a military confrontation (that would be a *rhomphaia*, or stick-sword). *Machaira* pertains to purification and shaping up, to removing impurities and elements that stick out and don't properly fit in. When Jesus says: "I came not to send peace, but a machaira" (Matthew 10:34), *machaira* is not the polar opposite of peace but as an instrument toward it.

The knife or sword, of the Spirit, is a metaphor for the word of God. Victorious soldiers have conquered the great dragon, the ancient serpent, called the Devil and Satan, *by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their witnessing, for they did not cling to life even in the face of death* (Revelation 12:9-11). The word 'witnessing' (*martureo*), means to create reality, not merely testifying in some formal way but also by being the embodiment of that which is conveyed for the hearers to latch onto. As we have already noted, Christ was victorious over Satan by His death, and here his soldiers share that victory as their witnessing leads to their death.



Note: Headings in this menu are hyperlinks. Click on them and they will take you to the relevant page

Part 1:

[Invisible wars, forces, spaces, and armour](#)

[Spiritual War concept](#)

[Spiritual War combatants](#)

[Spiritual War conduct](#)

Part 2:

[How Satan waged war on the Saviour and Saints and lost](#)

[Spiritual War concept](#)

[Spiritual War combatants](#)

[1. The Saviour](#)

[From cradle to the cross](#)

[From cross to the crown](#)

[2. The Saints](#)

[Spiritual War conduct](#)

[The Army](#)

[The Armour](#)

[The Action](#)

[The Ambush](#)

[The Ambassador](#)

[Conclusion](#)

[References](#)

17/23

[Word meanings are taken from Abarim Publications](#)



The Action (green)

Enabled

Paul calls this army to action. Firstly, it is to be strong or intrinsically enabled in the Lord (v10). Soldiers have to be 'can do' men in the theatre of war. Here, *enabled* is both passive and imperative. On the surface this may seem contradictory. How can I be commanded to do something that someone else is going to do to me? I think that the simple explanation is that the Lord does it, but I have to let Him do it. I have to cooperate with His work, indicating that *though we live in the world we are not carrying on a worldly war* (2 Corinthians 10:3).

This enablement is 'in the Lord' Who is the environment in which we are enabled. That is, our enablement is done within the reality of the Lord (means master), in the mastery of His innate and dynamic strength. However, notice the prepositions. The armour is "*of God*" and external to the army and has to be taken up. However, the theatre of war for the saints is "*in the Lord*", the sphere in which this spiritual warfare is fought. Just as Daniel didn't fight the evil spiritual forces directly himself but God and His forces did so, here to, the believers don't engage directly with evil combatants, but the Lord goes out in front as the Commander in Chief and fights for them.

Put on

The soldiers are to 'put on' all the full armour of God. 'Put on' is imperative. When the commander of the army provides the armour, He commands His soldiers to put it on.

Stand solidly

Soldiers have to stand solidly (v11, 13, 14), not fluid, totally certain. The final 'stand' v14 is imperative. Courage in the face of the enemy is demanded. In dealing with the sword of the Spirit, we noted that some gave their lives as they witnessed to the victory achieved over Satan by the cross. Despite that, the command to Christian soldiers is to stand, and withstand.

Wrestling

Used in the classics to denote a wrestling match between two slithery men. This word (*pale*), only occurs here (v12) in the New Testament where warfare is described by the metaphor of wrestling. Indeed, Paul had words at his disposal that would describe bloody battles and violent bludgeoning, but instead he used this word, which has a strong connotation of sport. Interestingly, Paul adds the metaphor of an armed soldier to a wrestler, which together is oxymoronic in our world. However, Paul is not dealing with the natural but the supernatural, not the physical but the spiritual, not the visible but the invisible, not the earthly, but the heavenly.

Resist

Means to stand against, to withstand, to keep standing despite opposing forces. As James says:

Be subjected (passive) to God. But resist (imperative) the devil and he will flee from you (James 4:7).

And Peter confirms:

Resist him (the devil), steadfast in your faith...(1 Peter 5:9).

Take up

Another imperative was to take into the possession or control (*lambano*) the armour of the soldier (v13). The armour is provided for the soldier but he has to take ownership and control of it. The shield of faith is mentioned specifically (v16), which amazingly has an extinguishing function.

Receive the head wrap & knife

The head wrap is offered as the item of security (v17). The knife of the Spirit, *is the spoken word of God*. This is a true metaphor taking two unrelated things and stating one is the other, enhancing the second with vivid imagery of the first. Unlike similes, metaphors do not use "like" or "as", so here we have "the knife is the spoken word", taking the characteristics of the first (knife) and applying them to the second (word). The (*machaira*), whose verbal form means to wrestle, indicates that the Christian soldier is to speak the word of God to counter spiritual opposition of his enemies.

Note: Headings in this menu are hyperlinks. Click on them and they will take you to the relevant page

Part 1:

[Invisible wars, forces, spaces, and armour](#)

[Spiritual War concept](#)

[Spiritual War combatants](#)

[Spiritual War conduct](#)

Part 2:

[How Satan waged war on the Saviour and Saints and lost](#)

[Spiritual War concept](#)

[Spiritual War combatants](#)

[1. The Saviour](#)

[From cradle to the cross](#)

[From cross to the crown](#)

[2. The Saints](#)

[Spiritual War conduct](#)

[The Army](#)

[The Armour](#)

[The Action](#)

[The Ambush](#)

[The Ambassador](#)

[Conclusion](#)

[References](#)

18/23

[Word meanings are taken from Abarim Publications](#)

Praying

In the New Testament this verb describes one's communication with the Creator in order to obtain help for all helplessnesses, frustrations and need (vs18-24).

18 Praying in the Spirit by means of all kinds of prayer and expression of helplessness and frustration just at the right time, sleeping with one eye open with enduring faithfulness and to expression of need concerning all the saints (plural adjective).

'Saints' (*hagios*) , usually translated as saints but the word means 'holy' and is a plural adjective. So what noun does it describe? None. English translations add their own noun such as saints, God's people, all believers everywhere, all of God's holy people, brothers and sisters, and all Christ's men and women. Eleven times in Ephesians Paul uses *hagios* as a plural adjective. One of these references is to the holy apostles and prophets (3:5), but the other 10 are references to the faithful in Christ Jesus 1:1), those chosen in Christ (1:4), those whose faith is in the Lord Jesus and have love toward others (1:15), God's inheritance is among all the people of God (1:18), members of the household of God (2:19), Paul is the very least of all the people of God (3:8), the Ephesians are linked with all of the people of God (3:18), the Ephesians with all of the people of God are the body of Christ (4:12), the Ephesians are to behave in a way that is proper among holy ones (5:3), they are to pray for the holy ones 6:18).

In conclusion, we can agree that English translations that add their own noun such as saints, God's people, all believers everywhere, all of God's holy people, brothers and sisters, and all Christ's men and women are accurately reflecting the Ephesian context.

The Ambush (red)

I've labelled this section of text as Ambush because it conveys some key characteristics of the Christian's enemies. They operate from a concealed position. They are not physical, not flesh and blood so we can't see them. Accordingly, they lie in wait, hidden, and have the advantage of unexpected confrontation.

Such invisible foes launch surprise, ambush attacks, and the danger for the Christian soldier is that because they are "out of sight, they become out of mind". This is a trap that we have to be sensitive about to avoid.

The Devil

English translations refer to the devil in v11 and the evil one in v16. 'Devil' here is (*diabolos*), which is an adjective that means slanderous and backbiting. As there is no noun supplied in the text, English Bible insert 'the devil'. Specifically, Paul is referring to the slanderous and backbiting one. His wiles are the means to get something done, so slander and backbiting are his means aimed at the believers.

'Evil' (*poneros*) in verse 16 is an adjective that describes an antagonistic quality or behaviour that reduces and debases, or hinders and impedes someone; anything that keeps you from going to where your Creator wants you to be. No noun is in the Greek text so English translators have provided 'one', so *the evil one*.

Rulers

'Rulers' (*arche*) means beginning. It may be used to describe the beginning of time (John 1:1) or an era (Matthew 24:8). It may refer to a point in time at which a series of events began (Luke 1:2), or when an effort was started and maintained throughout (John 8:25). Here, the word refers to rank and preeminence, a chief (see Colossians 1:18, Luke 20:20, Jude 1:6).



Note: Headings in this menu are hyperlinks. Click on them and they will take you to the relevant page

Part 1:

[Invisible wars, forces, spaces, and armour](#)

[Spiritual War concept](#)

[Spiritual War combatants](#)

[Spiritual War conduct](#)

Part 2:

[How Satan waged war on the Saviour and Saints and lost](#)

[Spiritual War concept](#)

[Spiritual War combatants](#)

[1. The Saviour](#)

[From cradle to the cross](#)

[From cross to the crown](#)

[2. The Saints](#)

[Spiritual War conduct](#)

[The Army](#)

[The Armour](#)

[The Action](#)

[The Ambush](#)

[The Ambassador](#)

[Conclusion](#)

[References](#)

19/23

[Word meanings are taken from Abarim Publications](#)

Authorities

'Authority' (*exousia*), denotes authority, particularly the allowableness of doing something or the faculty or liberty to do it (Matthew 9:8, Mark 3:15, Acts 1:7).

Cosmic powers of this present darkness

'Cosmic powers' (*kosmokrator*), literally means a world-order controller. In Greek literature it referred to world-ruling deities, but in New Testament times it denoted the Roman emperor. Occurs only in Ephesians 6:12, in plural, in Paul's list of procedural and bureaucratic enemies of the people. In tandem with 'darkness' (*skotos*), which also refers to Roman rule.

This age

NRSV translates 'age' as 'present'. So, we have the emperors of the darkness of this age, or the world-order controllers of the darkness of this age. 'Age' (*aion*) means life-span, or epoch, and describes any length of clearly defined span of time, whether one person's life or some era of certain renown. Also, this word may also apply to the vast span of history: the ages, the times of old.

The Greeks realised that time is an inherent and fundamental quality of the universe that doesn't exist separate from it (something moderns didn't know until Einstein). They personified "the ages" as the deity Aion. In Roman times, Aion began to personify the eternal Roman rule, who even begat a female counterpart named Aeternitas (from which we have our English word eternity).

What is "this age"? It is contrasted with 'the age to come' (Ephesians 1:21, Matthew 12:32, Mark 10:30, Luke 18:30), which is characterised by eternal life and the resurrection from the dead (Luke 20:34).

Further, "this age" has a god (*theos*), *who has blinded the minds of the unbelieving* (2 Corinthians 4:4). The etymology of our English word "god" is obscure, but it appears to have to do with an ancient Proto-Indo-European root that means "to invoke", so that our word "god" literally means "that which is invoked" or "that which is called upon". A god is the centre of one's life, and whatever masters you is your god.

In Ephesians 5:15-16, Paul challenged the believers to be careful how they lived, to make the most of the time, to ransom it, to rescue from loss because the days are evil. So, the 'evil (*poneros*) day' of 6:13 is the *impeding* day. As we have seen evil is an adjective that describes an antagonistic quality or behaviour that reduces and debases, or hinders and impedes someone; anything that keeps you as from going to where your Creator wants you to be.

'Day' (*emera*), rather than exclusively denoting a stretch of clock-time of fixed length, the word may in a poetic sense denote any continual period during which an activity is performed without interruption. So (*emera*) means "uninterrupted procedure" or "routine".

Many peoples deified their kings or emperors (the Egyptians, the Persians, the Romans), and their lives were centered upon that absolute authority. Even the "gods" that don't really exist but are abstract personifications of very real elements of humanity (like the gods of war or love or money or agriculture). In the pagan world, the invisible world of the divine was thought to consist of many interacting (*theoi*), and one of those sub-currents of the greater river would be called a (*theos*). In the Judaic worldview the singular word *theos* came to denote not just one individual but the living oneness of all lifeless and living *theoi*. This same principle of the one-and-the-many sits in the Hebrew word for God, namely (*elohim*), which is a plural word just like *theoi* but used grammatically in a singular way.

The spiritual forces of evil

Literally, Paul refers to these forces as *the spiritual impediment*. Without labouring the point, 'evil' (*poneria*) is an adjective that describes an antagonistic quality or behaviour that reduces and debases, or hinders and impedes someone; anything that keeps you as from going to where your Creator wants you to be. It's a *spiritual* impediment to believers who have and live by the Spirit of God.



Note: Headings in this menu are hyperlinks. Click on them and they will take you to the relevant page

Part 1:

[Invisible wars, forces, spaces, and armour](#)

[Spiritual War concept](#)

[Spiritual War combatants](#)

[Spiritual War conduct](#)

Part 2:

[How Satan waged war on the Saviour and Saints and lost](#)

[Spiritual War concept](#)

[Spiritual War combatants](#)

[1. The Saviour](#)

[From cradle to the cross](#)

[From cross to the crown](#)

[2. The Saints](#)

[Spiritual War conduct](#)

[The Army](#)

[The Armour](#)

[The Action](#)

[The Ambush](#)

[The Ambassador](#)

[Conclusion](#)

[References](#)

20/23

[Word meanings are taken from Abarim Publications](#)



In the heavenly places

These spiritual forces of evil are said to be in the heavenly places (6:12). Again, 'heavenly' (*epouranios*) is a plural adjective (heavenlies), and the text provides no noun so English translators insert 'places'. *Epouranios* means heavenly in a directional sense relative to earth.

The phrase *in the heavenlies* occurs five times in Ephesians (Ephesians 1:3, 1:20, 2:6, 3:10, 6:12) and nowhere else in the NT. *In the heavenlies* 'in Christ' is where the believer's spiritual blessing is found (1:3). There they belong, and from there that they come to us to be our present possession on earth. So they are blessings which have their seat where God Himself is and where Christ reigns. Also, *in the heavenlies* 'in Christ' is where the believer is seated (2:6) ([Bible Commentaries The Expositor's Greek Testament](#)).

Now, here are the remaining three texts concerning the heavenlies:

God has seated Christ at His right hand after the resurrection, in the heavenlies, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come (1:20-21).

Through the church the wisdom of God in its rich variety might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenlies (3:10).

Our struggle is not against enemies of blood and flesh, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers of this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenlies (6:12).

In the heavenlies, defines the domain of these spirit-forces. Their haunts are those super-terrestrial regions, not the highest heavens which are the abode of God, Christ, and angels, but those lower heavens which are at once sub-celestial and super-terrestrial. The phrase and the idea may be suggested by the Jewish notion of a series of seven heavens, each distinguished from the other.

The phrase *in the heavenlies*, expresses, therefore, much the same idea as the phrase 'the chief of the authority of the air' (*aer*) in Ephesians 2:2. In Homer, (*aer*) denotes mist or haze; in later writers it describes earth's atmosphere, in which wind blows, and clouds drift.

Perhaps the reason why Paul uses 'heavenlies' (*epouranios*) in 6:12 and not air' (*aer*) may be his wish to "bring out as strongly as possible the superhuman and super-terrestrial nature of the hostile spirits that ambush believers, and must be resisted ([Bible Commentaries The Expositor's Greek Testament](#)).

As The Voice translation puts verse 12: *We're not waging war against enemies of flesh and blood alone. No, this fight is against tyrants, against authorities, against supernatural powers and demon princes that slither in the darkness of this world, and against wicked spiritual armies that lurk about in heavenly places.*

The flaming arrows of the evil one

The flaming darts or arrows, only found in Ephesians 6:16, are (*belos*), which describes any sort of ballistic missile. In antiquity our word would have described anything from arrows to catapulted boulders to a hunk of a dead cow famously flung at Odysseus. Figuratively, our word became applied to anything both violent and swift, even swords, birth pangs, or the sudden demise of celebrated heroes.

Just note in passing, though, these fiery ballistic missiles come from the impending one. Another *spiritual* impediment to believers who have and live by the Spirit of God.

Note: Headings in this menu are hyperlinks. Click on them and they will take you to the relevant page

Part 1:

[Invisible wars, forces, spaces, and armour](#)

[Spiritual War concept](#)

[Spiritual War combatants](#)

[Spiritual War conduct](#)

Part 2:

[How Satan waged war on the Saviour and Saints and lost](#)

[Spiritual War concept](#)

[Spiritual War combatants](#)

1. The Saviour

[From cradle to the cross](#)

[From cross to the crown](#)

2. The Saints

[Spiritual War conduct](#)

[The Army](#)

[The Armour](#)

[The Action](#)

[The Ambush](#)

[The Ambassador](#)

[Conclusion](#)

[References](#)

21/23

[Word meanings are taken from Abarim Publications](#)



The Ambassador (blue)

19 **Pray** also for me, so that when I speak, a message may be given to me to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel,

20 for which I am an **ambassador** in chains. **Pray** that I may declare it boldly, as I must speak.

21 So that **you** also may know how **I** am and what **I** am doing, Tychicus will tell **you** everything. He is a dear brother and a faithful minister in the **Lord**.

22 **I** am sending him to **you** for this very purpose, to let **you** know how **we** are, and to encourage **your** hearts.

23 Peace be to **the whole community**, and love with faith, from **God** the Father and the **Lord Jesus Christ**.

24 Grace be with all who have an undying love for our **Lord Jesus Christ** (Ephesians 6:10-24).

The ambassador (*presbeuo*) was a foregoer. In the classics this verb may refer to age (to be the "first comer" of two brothers) but by the time of the New Testament this verb referred to the function and status of "one who goes before."

Ambassadors were people who were sent by their lords into foreign territories, to establish a base there and to prepare a proper climate for their lord to be received in. Our verb is used in 2 Corinthians 5:20 and Ephesians 6:20 only, but obviously in the latter sense of being ambassadors, in the words of Isaiah, "*clearing the way for the Lord in the wilderness, and making smooth in the desert a highway for our God*" (Isaiah 40:3).

Paul wrote the letter to the Ephesians while under house arrest in Rome, probably chained to a guard by the wrist. Such lack of freedom would make writing difficult. Ambassadors usually enjoyed "diplomatic immunity" Paul, however, was not treated with high honour even though he was a royal envoy for the "King of kings". He was a living example of being strong in the Lord in the face of spiritual ambush.

Paul asks the Ephesians to pray for him for he is in the same spiritual conflict as they. He doesn't ask for his freedom, but for freedom of speech as the ambassador of the Lord to speak the word that's been given to him. In this setting, Paul is a soldier cut off from his Ephesian colleagues so, realising that communication is vital, he sends Tychicus, from the Roman province of Asia and the beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord who will update the church on Paul's situation and provide encouragement (Acts 20:4, Colossians 4:7, 2 Timothy 4:12, Titus 3:12). Further, being sensitive to fragmentation of the Ephesian church, Paul will use Tychicus to call their hearts closer to each other. Soldier cohesion is essential in their spiritual war.

Conclusion

At the start of this paper I asked a number of questions. They were: What is "spiritual warfare", what does it look like, and how would we know when we were in one? Who are the combatants, and how should Christians conduct themselves? We are now in a position to provide answers.

As we have seen, spiritual warfare is invisible, using invisible armour, taking place among invisible forces in invisible spaces, so how would we know when we were in one? What does it look like? We can't see the invisible, but we have already noted that SW has visible, tangible effects on the earth, as the Jewish exiles saw when their building worked was stopped through deception and legal and political barriers. The two graphics on the next page summarise the dimensions, and therefore the meaning of SW, and three steps Christians and churches should take to determine if they are in SW, and what to do about it.

The dimensions of spiritual warfare

Note: Headings in this menu are hyperlinks. Click on them and they will take you to the relevant page

Part 1:

[Invisible wars, forces, spaces, and armour](#)

[Spiritual War concept](#)

[Spiritual War combatants](#)

[Spiritual War conduct](#)

Part 2:

[How Satan waged war on the Saviour and Saints and lost](#)

[Spiritual War concept](#)

[Spiritual War combatants](#)

1. The Saviour

[From cradle to the cross](#)

[From cross to the crown](#)

2. The Saints

[Spiritual War conduct](#)

[The Army](#)

[The Armour](#)

[The Action](#)

[The Ambush](#)

[The Ambassador](#)

[Conclusion](#)

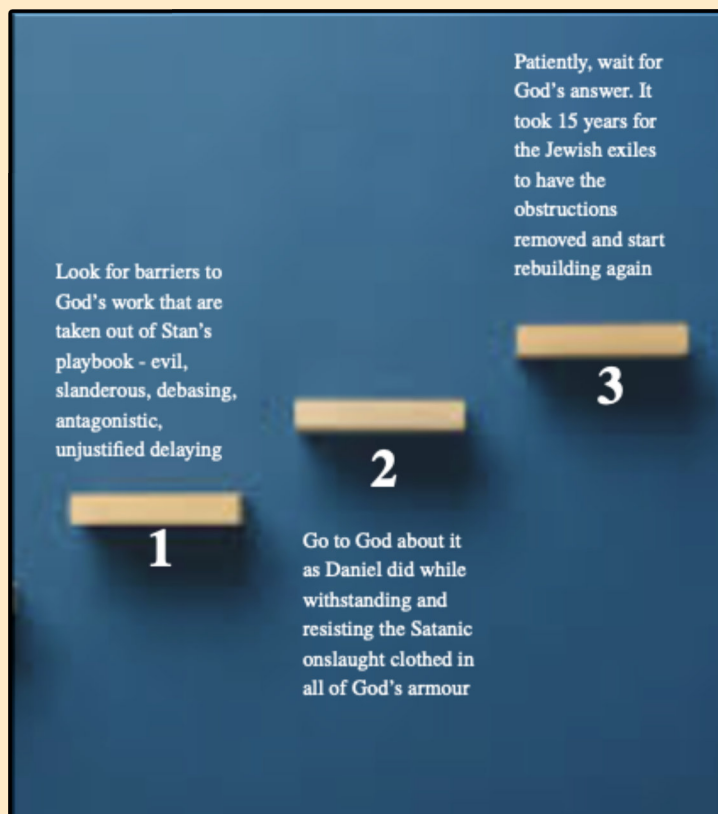
[References](#)

22/23

Word meanings are taken from Abarim Publications



Diagnosing spiritual warfare & what to do about it



Note: Headings in this menu are hyperlinks. Click on them and they will take you to the relevant page

Part 1:

[Invisible wars, forces, spaces, and armour](#)

[Spiritual War concept](#)

[Spiritual War combatants](#)

[Spiritual War conduct](#)

Part 2:

[How Satan waged war on the Saviour and Saints and lost](#)

[Spiritual War concept](#)

[Spiritual War combatants](#)

[1. The Saviour](#)

[From cradle to the cross](#)

[From cross to the crown](#)

[2. The Saints](#)

[Spiritual War conduct](#)

[The Army](#)

[The Armour](#)

[The Action](#)

[The Ambush](#)

[The Ambassador](#)

[Conclusion](#)

[References](#)

23/23

[Word meanings are taken from Abarim Publications](#)



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