



The Book of Matthew Lesson 5 2Q 2016 The Seen and the Unseen War

SABBATH

What do you think of the title? What is the war? Where is it waged? What weapons are being used by both sides?

Is this a battle of might and power? How do we know this is not a physical battle?

And there was war in heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon and his angels fought back. Rev 12:7

The Greek for war is: **πόλεμος** [*polemos* /**pol**-em-os/] from which we get polemic, a war of words, a war of ideas.

The Bible says Satan is the father of lies—where do lies have their power? Do lies have power over rocks, or rivers, or the sun, or air, or plants or animals? Where do lies have power? In the minds of intelligent beings. And what do lies do?

They infect the heart—they infect the self, the core person, the character and incite fear and selfishness.

What does God want to accomplish in this war?

- Destroy sin—is that all God wants?
- Could God destroy sin by destroying all beings He created in the universe? Is that what God wants a sterile universe devoid of life?
- God wants more than the eradication of sin—God wants the healing and restoration of His children.
- Can God achieve His goal, win the war, by the use of might and power? Why not?

Then what are the weapons God uses? Truth love and freedom—any Bible texts come to mind?

- Truth will set you free Jn 8:32
- 2Cor 10:3-5
- The memory verse for today

Read memory text: “From the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heave suffers violence, and the violent take it by force.” Jump to Sunday...



SUNDAY

Read first paragraph, “Scripture is the Word of God...” Do you find our memory text difficult to understand? Read first three paragraphs in **MONDAY**’s lesson: “Bible students...”

Is the memory verse difficult to understand? What is difficult to understand?

If one views the texts through imposed law lenses, and falsely concludes God’s government functions like human governments, then this text is difficult to understand—which is it, using might to forcefully advance, or being beaten down forcefully by others. It seems to be one or the other.

But when we return to God’s design law of love, then this becomes easy to understand. God’s government is the government of love, truth and freedom, at war with Satan’s government of coercion, deceit and selfishness. So, God’s government is being violently attacked by Satan, but the power of love and truth forcefully advance *as* it is being violently attacked. Nothing demonstrated this reality more powerfully than the Cross. At the Cross you have Jesus wielding the weapons of truth, love and freedom and Satan wielding the weapons of lies, coercion and selfishness. Satan violently attacked Jesus, but whose kingdom forcefully advanced at the Cross? God’s kingdom did.

You see the same when:

- Stephen was stoned, who was violently attacking, whose kingdom forcefully advanced?
- Christians martyred in arenas of Rome, who was violently attacking, whose kingdom forcefully advanced?

Do we see these two weapons wielded in other settings? What about Gandhi and the British Empire?

How does Satan’s kingdom seek to advance? By use of might and power to intimidate, coerce and eliminate opposition.

How does God’s kingdom go forward forcefully? By love, forgiveness, truth, grace, patience—and where does God’s kingdom exercise it’s power? In the hearts, minds, characters of people. God’s kingdom transforms people—when God’s weapons are used, it turns enemies into friends:

Anyone who is joined to Christ is a new being; the old is gone, the new has come. ¹⁸All this is done by God, who through Christ changed us from enemies into his friends and gave us the task of making others his friends also. ¹⁹Our message is that God was making the whole human race his friends through Christ. God did not keep an account of their sins, and he has given us the message which tells how he makes them his friends. 2Cor 5:17-19 GNT

This is what God is fighting for—for His friends, for his children, for their healing. This type of war is fought upon design law, not imposed law. God can never win by using coercion, might, power.



Billions are deceived into thinking that it is Godly to use coercive power to achieve God's goals—this is returning to the Dark Ages when people were burned at the stake in order to “save” them and send their souls to heaven.

- Taliban and ISIS use coercion to promote their way
- Remember Christians in Rwanda
- Or Protestants and Catholics in Northern Ireland
- Or so-called Christians who blow up abortion clinics
- What about using government to coerce conscience?

Saul prior to Damascus road, thought it was right and proper to use coercion to evangelize. He thought it was how God worked, but then he learned God's true methods and wrote that every person is to be fully persuaded in their own minds. We never coerce.

We cannot win God's cause by using Satan's methods! Many Christians do not understand this and are being duped right now into advocating for actions that are designed to coerce conscience. But many liberals don't understand this and are advocating for the same thing, just on a different issue.

In this war Jesus said that the gates of hell would not prevail against the church. What does this mean? What type of weapons are gates? Defensive weapons.

Satan has lied, and by his lies he has infected the hearts and minds of human beings and established his beachhead, his hold on the species human. However, lies cannot hold against the truth. The truth about who God is as revealed in Christ will destroy the stronghold of lies and free people.

TUESDAY

The lesson asks us to examine several Bible verses to discuss the reality of a great controversy.

Let's read Matthew 12:25-37, this is from *The Remedy*:

²⁴ The Pharisees heard the crowd's growing confidence in Jesus and sought to undermine him: saying, "This is evil sorcery. It is by power from Beelzebub—lord of devils and flies—that he drives out demons."

²⁵ Jesus knew their selfish motives and said to them: "Every kingdom that wars against itself destroys itself, and every town or home that fights against itself will collapse.²⁶ If Satan drives out Satan, then he wars against himself. How can his kingdom survive?²⁷ And if I free minds from the domination of demons by the power of Beelzebub, then by whose power do your people drive out demons? Your own practices reveal that you know better than to accuse me of using evil powers.²⁸ No! We all know it is not by Satan's power that I drive off demons; it is by the power of God's Spirit—which is evidence that God's kingdom of love has arrived.

²⁹ "Or think of it this way: How can a person enter the house of a strong man and carry away his possessions unless they first neutralize the strong man? Only then can they take what is his.



³⁰ "Whoever is not united with me—working on my team to unite humanity together in love—is against me, causing division and disunity.³¹ So let me tell you plainly: Every sin—every deviation from God's design—can be healed, except the rejection of the Spirit, for the Spirit administers the Remedy which renews the heart in love.³² Anyone who speaks against the Son can still be healed, but speaking against the Holy Spirit cannot be healed, either now or in the future, for it is the Spirit that works in the heart to administer the Remedy, and the Spirit works only in a willing heart.³³ Make a tree good and it will bring forth good fruit; make a tree bad and it will bring forth bad fruit—for a tree is recognized by its fruit.³⁴ You slither and plot like a pit of vipers. Do you really think that you, who are evil in heart, can say anything good? For the true character of one's heart is revealed by what a person says and does.³⁵ The good person speaks and does good out of the wellspring of good stored within them, and the evil person speaks and does evil out of the wellspring of evil stored within them. So, speaking against the Holy Spirit reveals that one's heart is closed to the working of the Spirit.³⁶ I tell you plainly, every word spoken will be accounted for—an accurate symptom will be tied directly to the correct diagnosis of each person's heart.³⁷ The words you speak reveal the true condition of your heart, either 'healed' or 'terminal.'"

Is there a warfare theme in this text?

What kind of war is being described by Jesus? A war for the heart, and what is the Agency of God that brings victory? The Holy Spirit, and what are the characteristics of the Holy Spirit? Truth and Love—and where do truth and love have their power? What does truth destroy? What does love destroy?

Why is this the method to be used? Because God wants to heal and save His people and if God were to simply use divine creative energy to overwrite your minds with a new perfection, then you, the person you are, would not exist. Your unique individuality can only be saved through a cooperative relationship with God, in which the truth wins you to trust Him and you personally choose to cooperate with Him, surrendering to Him, inviting the Spirit within to transform and heal.

Read Isaiah 27:1:

On that day the Lord will use his powerful and deadly sword to punish Leviathan, that wriggling, twisting dragon, and to kill the monster that lives in the sea.

What does this mean? Does it sound like God will use His power to inflict punishment? Let's add another text:

Isaiah 26:21,22 See, the LORD is coming out of his dwelling to punish the people of the earth for their sins. The earth will disclose the blood shed upon her; she will conceal her slain no longer. In that day, the LORD will punish with his sword, his fierce, great and powerful sword.

What does this mean?



Those operating at level four and below, the imposed law construct, will read these verses and conclude God will use might and power to destroy. They fail to understand the reality of God's kingdom, how design law functions, and how to integrate Scripture.

Note Revelation 19:19-21:

Then I saw the beast and the kings of the earth and their armies gathered together to make war against the rider on the horse and his army. But the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who had performed the miraculous signs on his behalf. With these signs he had deluded those who had received the mark of the beast and worshiped his image. The two of them were thrown alive into the fiery lake of burning sulfur. **The rest of them were killed with the sword that came out of the mouth of the rider on the horse**, and all the birds gorged themselves on their flesh.

The sword is coming out of the rider's mouth, who is the Rider? The Rider is Christ. What is the sword coming out of His mouth? Is it speaking of a large piece of metal? No, what comes out of a person's mouth? Words and what kind of words does Christ always speak? Truth! Therefore, the sword is symbolic of the truth. "The word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart." Hebrews 4:12

The wicked are destroyed "because they did love the truth and thus be saved." 2 Thes 2:10.

In other words the wicked have hardened their minds in lies, solidified their characters in falsehood, warped their selves in deception and the sword of God is the truth that cuts through their lies right to their inner self.

When people sin they are convicted with guilt, this is the work of the Holy Spirit. No one likes guilt and we all want it to go away. There are only two ways to resolve appropriate guilt, God's way – repentance, restoration and reconciliation. And Satan's way, lies, denial, distortion, externalization. Adam said after his sin, "It wasn't me. It was that woman you gave me. If she had not brought me the fruit I would have never ate it. Don't blame me, blame her."

This is the hardened condition of all those who have not opened their hearts and minds to the Spirit of Truth here. What will it be like for those who have lived in the darkness of lies to come face to face with infinite truth, truth which can not be denied, truth that cannot be avoided, truth which sears through to their souls? Their minds cannot take it and they die.

Rom 16:20:

And God, our source of peace, will soon crush Satan under your feet.



The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you.

What does this mean? How does God crush Satan under our feet?

From *The Remedy*:

And when we open our hearts to love others completely, totally selflessly at all costs, rejecting Satan's methods of selfishness, then the God of peace crushes Satan and all his lies under our feet. May the grace of Christ be with you.

Genesis 3:14-19:

So the Lord God said to the serpent, “Because you have done this, “Cursed are you above all the livestock and all the wild animals! You will crawl on your belly and you will eat dust all the days of your life. ¹⁵ And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel.” ¹⁶ To the woman he said, “I will greatly increase your pains in childbearing; with pain you will give birth to children. Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you.” ¹⁷ To Adam he said, “Because you listened to your wife and ate from the tree about which I commanded you, ‘You must not eat of it,’ “Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat of it all the days of your life. ¹⁸ It will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the plants of the field. ¹⁹ By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return.”

How do you understand this?

Those who oppose the message we present about God, and instead prefer the dictator view of God, frequently use these passages as evidence that God does punish for sin.

What about cursing the serpent? The serpent is not a sentient being. It doesn't have a character, a moral conscience, and therefore cannot choose to sin. Thus, the actions of God in causing the serpent to crawl on its belly, is not punishment. It is not discipline to teach snakes something. Then for whose benefit was this done? For humankind, but how does this action help sinful humans? It was an action to reveal, in a perpetual object lesson, the destructive results of aligning with Satan, of choosing to deviate from God's design. Exaltation does not occur, degradation occurs. And of course real life validates this.

Further, a Messiah was promised to come and undo what Satan's infection did to this creation. To heal and to save humanity and the earth.



What about Genesis 3:16, how do you understand it? “Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you.” The immature think God is inflicting this upon women and wrongly conclude it is God’s desire or will for wives to be subjugated to the authoritarian rule of their husbands.

But the mature realize what naturally happens when love is replaced by selfishness in the heart—the strong dominate the weak and the weak long to be protected by the strong! Again, God is *not* using power to inflict an outcome, but *is* accurately diagnosing the condition of humanity and announcing what will now transpire as a result of their sin-infected hearts.

What about the increase in pain in childbearing? Is God using power to punish for sin? The Hebrew here in some versions is translated sorrow rather than pain. Does that make a difference, “I will greatly multiple your sorrow in childbirth.”

- Is this speaking of physical pain of labor?
- Or something else?
- God designed his universe to run on other centered love—when running in perfect accord with His design there was no pain or suffering.
 - But now sin entered, what happens when love tries to express itself on earth now, in this world of sin?
 - Does it meet opposition?
 - Is there sorrow involved in living lives of love?
 - What object lesson could powerfully represent the struggle of love to overcome sin and bring forth a new life in Christ?
 - Could it be the struggle of giving birth?
 - So, could the sorrow, struggle, and pain of labor be a therapeutic intervention to remind all of us, that because of sin, love will win, but only through trial, pain, through sorrow. Jesus was called a man of sorrows—why? In our memory text we explored how God’s kingdom advances as it is attacked. Could this be revealed in the sorrow of labor, new life comes forth only through pain in a world of sin?

What about “Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat of it all the days of your life. It will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the plants of the field. By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return.” (GEN 3:17-19)

Level one through four thinkers conclude: *God has rules. Those rules were broken, therefore God, in justice, had to inflict punishment so that justice is served.*

But level five through seven thinkers understand a larger reality. They understand that God’s laws are design parameters—the protocols upon which nature operates. And when Adam sinned nature became infected with an antagonistic principle along with an enemy that was now afoot infecting God’s creation with deviations from his design (mutations). (MT 13:28) The mature include in their understanding of Genesis what Paul wrote in Romans, that all nature groans under the weight of sin.



(8:22) Thus, design law adherents realize God is not inflicting punishment, but accurately diagnosing and announcing reality—what Adam’s actions have naturally resulted in—that nature now brings forth thorns, thistles, weeds and it will be harder to produce the desired crop. And that Adam, out of harmony with God’s design for life, disconnected from God’s full life-giving presence, will slowly deteriorate and die.

Read Ephesians 6:10-18: From *The Remedy*:

Finally, stay strong in your connection and devotion to the Lord and his mighty power.¹¹ Arm your minds with God's complete set of armor so that you can join the ranks of Christ's soldiers and stand successfully in the face of the devil's schemes.¹² For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, with man-made weapons, but against all individuals, entities and powers that misrepresent God and darken minds, and against Satan—the originator of lies about God—and his cohorts who also misrepresent God in the heavenly realms.¹³ Therefore arm your minds with God's full set of armor so that when Satan's grand deception comes and it seems the heavens are about to fall, you are able to stand; and when you have done everything to present the truth and expose Satan's lies—don't falter; stand!¹⁴ Stand firm, with the truth of God wrapped around you like a belt, with a righteous, Christlike character developed within—like a breastplate,¹⁵ and the peace that comes from accepting the good news about God—like track shoes providing good traction and a solid foundation.¹⁶ Also, hold fast the shield of trust, which extinguishes all the burning fear and insecurity brought by the devil's temptations.¹⁷ Take with you the helmet of a healed mind—a mind protected from the assaults of Satan; and attack the lies about God with the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God—the truth.¹⁸ And talk with God with an enlightened mind, intelligently, on all occasions, about all of your concerns, requests, plans, and issues. With all of this in mind, be alert and always keep praying for the God's people.

WEDNESDAY

Why the battle gets nasty? Why do you think?

The lesson points us to the life of John the Baptist and how he died at the hands of Herod. Why did Herod kill John the Baptist?

Is there a difference between how God’s government functions and how human institutions function? What’s the difference?

How do institutions function? What methods, what laws do they use? Do they use design law or imposed laws? Do they ever rise above level four?

Are institutions vulnerable to institutional protection at the expense of members? Was John a member of Israel? Did he get sacrificed to protect Herod’s power?



Jesus fared no better than John the Baptist; the leaders of God's organized church on earth said, "You do not realize that it is better for you that one man die for the people than that the whole nation perish." (Jn 11:50) Better to kill an innocent than allow damage to the institution.

And throughout church history *every* denominational church institution has sacrificed souls to protect their system. Organizational cover-up of child molestation in order to protect the institution has been well documented in the media, but at what cost? -The exploitation and injury of more innocents.

Consider the parable of the Good Samaritan, who is the person that is recognized as being right with God? It is not the priest or Levite, those who had the *right* doctrinal definitions, who participated in the *right* religious rituals, who attended the *right* worship programs, who worshipped on the *right* day. No! It was the Samaritan, who, as far as we know, never sacrificed at Temple, or kept the Sabbath, or ate a kosher diet. So what did the Samaritan have right? He had love in his heart—he loved others more than self!

The Samaritan gave of his time, energy, and resources to help another, with no expectation of return. This is love! This is God's goal. This is what Jesus taught, "As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another." (Jn 13:34,35) We are only truly followers of Christ if we have hearts that love—nothing else will suffice, no ritual, no doctrinal definition, no legal adjustment, no organizational membership—love is the life blood of God's universe and only those who have such love are genuine members of God's family!

If anyone says, "I love God," yet hates his brother, he is a liar. For anyone who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, cannot love God, whom he has not seen. (1Jn 4:20)

Oswald Chambers recognized this problem:

Reconciliation means the restoring of the relationship between the entire human race and God, **putting it back to what God designed it to be. This is what Jesus Christ did in redemption. The church ceases to be spiritual when it becomes self-seeking, only interested in the development of its own organization.** The reconciliation of the human race according to His plan means realizing Him not only in our lives individually, but also in our lives collectively. Jesus Christ sent apostles and teachers for this very purpose— that the corporate Person of Christ and His church, made up of many members, might be brought into being and made known. **We are not here to develop a spiritual life of our own, or to enjoy a quiet spiritual retreat. We are here to have the full realization of Jesus Christ, for the purpose of building His body.** ¹(emphasis mine)

¹ <http://utmost.org/the-spiritually-self-seeking-church/>



We can only fulfill God's purpose of living in love, being conduits of God's love to help heal others, by returning to design law.

Does this mean organizations are bad? Not at all, organizations are quite useful as they help us pool resources to achieve mission: schools, hospitals, worship centers, shelters, helping the homeless, provide concerts, weddings, teaching, outreach etc. etc.

Organizations are quite useful—but we must remember their purpose—their purpose is to help reach souls for God's kingdom. When the organization operates loses its vision of saving souls and instead becomes self-promoting, then organizations can fail to promote healing and actually obstruct it.

Another point, when John sent his disciples to ask Jesus if he was the one, how did Jesus respond?

What did Jesus provide to John? What did Jesus not do? Jesus provided evidence—Jesus did not respond with a declaration—“Yes it is I, the Messiah, believe!”

What does this tell us about what God wants from us? What method does He use?

THURSDAY

A lost cause—what is a lost cause? Satan's position and all who side with him, why is it a lost cause?

Was there ever a pathway to win for Satan? Why not? If Satan actually succeeded in defeating Christ on earth, what happens? Does God die? If God dies (which He would not and cannot) but if God dies what happens to the rest of the universe? It ceases to exist—so Satan and all who follow him die.

If Christ would have been defeated on earth, what would have happened to God? He would have grieved because He would have lost humans, this special creation would have died, along with Satan and all who align with him, but God would not have died. Satan's win was still a loss for Satan and all who align with him—why? Because Satan's idea of a win is total separation from God, who is the source of life. Satan is delusional—his entire government is based on a lie, that God's government is imposed, and that Satan can have life on his own separate from God—delusional.

It would be like an astronaut, on an umbilical cutting the umbilical to be free from the ship and thinking he could continue to live.

Read last paragraph, “Just as Satan lost...” Why is our only protection to be on Christ's side?

FRIDAY

Read and discuss the questions



ANNOUNCEMENTS:

The God-Shaped Brain is now available in Korean and is available at this website:
http://book.naver.com/bookdb/book_detail.nhn?bid=9519886

The Remedy – Dr. Jennings’ New Testament Paraphrase—FREE for ios and android systems.

The Journal of the Watcher is now available as a **HARD COVER book at Amazon** as well as a movie in itunes for everyone without ios or android, you can now get it in itunes. It is also available as an APP for Apple and Android devices.

May 18-20: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at *The Struggle Is Real* Conference at Seacoast Church in Charleston SC, for more info and to register click this link <http://www.2016summit.net>

October 14-16: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Drakensville, South Africa Campmeeting.

October 19, 20: Dr. Jennings will be speaking in Ladismith South Africa (venue to be determined)

October 21, 22: Dr. Jennings will be speaking in Cape Town, South Africa