



Principalities, Powers and Demons:

**Their Differences, Their Origins
and Our Authority Over Them!**

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Introduction

Apart from providing a general understanding of the spiritual realm, especially evil spirits and fallen angels, the primary purpose of this book is to show that while ordinary Christians can and should be expelling demons/evil spirits, they should not attempt to personally displace Principalities and Powers. The reason should be obvious - any human being attempting that would quickly become a casualty, because they would be beyond their God-given authority.

To deal with the higher powers of evil requires a group of churches in the given area, working together for the Kingdom of God, and truly led by His Holy Spirit.

Spiritual Warfare becomes effective when Intercessors work together in unity, followed by the ground troops who need to walk the territory - this latter being the Evangelists, Disciples and Bible Teachers, with growing maturity of the Saints of God backing them up.

In these two papers blended together for the benefit of the Saints of God, my friend Dr. Dale Sides has provided excellent resources and understanding for us to learn from and teach others.

I commend this teaching to you, and encourage wise dissemination of the contents.

Selwyn Stevens, Ph.D. (Bib.St.); D.Min.
President - Jubilee Resources International

Part One

Background to the Issues

Jesus made reference to something in the Bible from the book of Enoch that will revolutionize our understanding about demons and ultimately our authority over them. Jesus knew something about demons and evil spirits that we do not. If we think that we know everything on a given subject, then we have removed the possibility of learning something new. Jesus' teaching in Luke 11:24 makes reference to the book of Enoch, chapter 15:8 which will be quoted later in this article. This passage reveals the true identity of demons - that they are not fallen angels as most Christians have assumed.

With this additional insight, we can discover what Jesus knew. Then by following this trail to other related references, we can obtain the same understanding He had. The anointing of the Holy Spirit, along with this awareness, gave Jesus confidence to cast evil spirits out with the finger of God. Perhaps the same result will come to us (John 14:12). This knowledge will allow us to differentiate between demons and principalities or powers, a major deficiency in Christian understanding. When this understanding is gained, we will have learned how to deal with each category in their own rank, order and specific function. Then our faith to deal with evil spirits will increase, since faith comes from hearing and understanding the Word of God. This comprehensive process of acquiring wisdom regarding evil spirits will make us more effective in realizing the Lord's accomplishments in us, for us, and His commission to us - to exercise authority over the evil spirit kingdom.

Introduction:

Since the beginning of history, the mystery of evil spirits - their origin, function and interaction with mankind - has been a perplexing problem. Images associated with evil spirits vary from giant gargoyles, ghostly shadows, and fiendish phenomena, all the way to mischievous imps and friendly ghosts. Regardless of the associated image, it is obvious that the identity of these spirits has purposefully been obscured or else they would have manifested themselves in a simple, explainable form. The very complexity of the enigma itself leads us to realize that these spirits are creatures of deception. The reason for their stealth is simple: the sinister hand of Satan is behind the scenes, cloaking the issues. He knows that if we discover their true identities, we can claim authority over them. Then their control over us will be greatly decreased.

"Where does evil come from?" is another related question that seems to be obscured right along with this Satanic mystique. Because clear-cut teaching on the origin of evil spirits has been lacking, Christians have often been deceived into attributing evil to God Himself, even though the Bible testifies of Him as a loving, benevolent Father. As we press into this study, we will see that God's good intentions and His creation of free will have been perverted by evil spirits. They have cleverly deceived people into believing that God is responsible for the evil in the world. Evil spirit manifestations of "smoke and mirrors" intentionally keep them out of sight and beyond explanation, causing mankind to blame God for the evil caused by the evil spirits.

The question "Do evil spirits actually exist?" should not be asked by a truly observant, discerning person. The pitied fool who does not believe in the existence of evil spirits probably has a dog named "Lucky," who just "coincidentally" is missing. He can be identified by having only three legs, no tail, one eye and thinking he is a cat.

Evil spirits are real! People interested in succeeding in life need to know about these creatures - not for sensational reasons, but for simple survival. This expose on the subject will help to identify evil

spirits and their origin, and will remove the mystique surrounding them. The focus of this expose is to increase our knowledge and therefore our authority over evil spirits.

This inquiry into evil spirits cannot be dismissed as an insignificant matter by individuals who want to fully exercise and claim the authority that Jesus gave us† (Matthew 10:1). God tells us in 2 Corinthians 2:11 that we are not to “be ignorant of Satan’s devices.” We are called as soldiers of the Lord (2 Timothy 2:3), and are actively wrestling against these unseen foes (Ephesians 6:12). We are further instructed in 1 Corinthians 9:26 to fight not as one that “beats the air,” but we are to engage the prince of the power of the air (Ephesians 2:2). Furthermore, Jesus is looking for overcomers (Luke 11:21; Revelation 3:21).

The salient point of this study is not to give unwarranted attention to demons or to magnify the devil, but rather to increase our understanding of them in order to exercise our authority in Christ over them. Frankly, I am not submitting this article to rehash old issues, to waste your time or mine, but to shed some added light to this subject.

Quite honestly, since most of us have thought that demons are fallen angels, when the evidence is considered, we will have to accept that we have been deceived. We are not to point fingers at teachers, and accuse them of deception, but to uncover Satan’s snare. We all are in the process of learning. Likewise, as a teacher I have been guilty of teaching this erroneously in the past.

The point is this: if we have considered demons to be fallen angels, we have given them too much credit and attributed to them too much power. When we realize their proper identity, one of our main objectives will be accomplished: to shrink them down to proper size and thereby remove any fear of dealing with them. This objective is not just to increase our understanding but to emphasize our ability to exercise our authority over the evil kingdom and bring deliverance to the captives.

The Background of the Problem

Though this study is being presented as a biblically based article, it may be of benefit to realize that most major religions try to explain the origin of evil spirits in some way. Some profane sources outside of biblical context try to explain evil spirits as gods and never question their origin. This is largely a Hindu explanation. Others, particularly from a Buddhist perspective, say that evil spirits are reincarnated spirits of dead humans, especially those of dead relatives. Both of these explanations have infiltrated Christian thinking to some degree, since some Christians never question their origin and others think they are spirits of dead men. Another source, primarily from mythology, explains evil spirits as offspring of Zeus or Jupiter. Regardless of the religion, most every belief system gives credence to the existence of evil spirits.

From a biblical interpretation, the most widely-accepted belief attributes all evil spirits as being fallen angels who left their heavenly rank when Lucifer was deposed. There is some marginal belief suggesting they are spirits of dead humans. Another explanation is that they are the spirits of a race of people who lived before Adam and Eve. Each belief claims† some biblical basis and grounds for consideration, but all have noticeable discrepancies when compared to the actual biblical characteristics of demons.

We must remember that Satan is the father of lies and the master of deception. Though he is a deceiver, there is a method behind his madness. He has allowed the Christian world to accept that demons are fallen angels. By so doing, coupled with a related lie that angels are superior to men, Satan has imposed a sentence of inferiority upon mankind. His deception has had a purpose - to make people think that demons are more powerful than they really are, and that they are more powerful than men. (Misinformation is a powerful weapon in warfare.)

A major reason why this deception has been successful stems from not differentiating between the category of demons and the category of principalities and powers. This dilemma has arisen from a lack of attention to biblical details. We should not be surprised to find that the entire field of demonology is in disarray concerning terminology. There is a lack of defined terms. Imprecise terminology results in ambiguity at best, and ignorance or confusion at worst. Satan has used our ignorance to hide his functions. For example, we have used the word “devil” interchangeably for “demon” and vice versa. Also, we have said that people are “possessed of devils” when the proper translation of the Greek word *daimonizomenous* gives no inkling to a “possession.” It should have been rendered “demonized.” Likewise, we have inadvertently used the word “demon” to describe all unclean spirits, including principalities or powers.

As we move into discovering what demons are and their origin, the differences between these evil spirits will be thoroughly explained. Additionally, we will learn how to deal with each category. For the sake of introducing this subject and grasping the whole concept, the following statement is offered: the genus (or kind, family) of principalities, powers and demons is “evil;” they are, however, different species. Principalities and powers are the one-third of the angelic host who were banished with Lucifer. They still occupy a designated portion of the heavens and are territorially assigned over regions of the earth. Demons, on the other hand, are terrestrial spirits, confined to the face of the earth. They literally “walk” and seek the resting place of a human body. Demons are unclean spirits who primarily invade and corporeally inhabit the bodies of men or women. The origin of this species is different than that of fallen angels.

What Are Demons?

The key to understanding what demons are and the origin of their species is obtained by consulting with the Master, Jesus Christ. He came to reveal their identity and to give authority over them to his disciples. Before studying their origin, it will be helpful to familiarize ourselves with some of their characteristics and attributes.

Using just one isolated section of scripture, Luke 4:32-35, we can learn much about demons.

And they [the people] were astonished at His [Jesus'] teaching, for His word was with authority. Now in the synagogue there was a man who had a spirit of an unclean demon. And he cried out with a loud voice:saying, “Let us alone! What have we to do with You, Jesus of Nazareth? Did You come to destroy us? I know You, who You are - the Holy One of God!” But Jesus rebuked him, saying, “Be quiet, and come out of him!” And when the demon had thrown him in their midst, it came out of him and did not hurt him. Luke 4:32-35 NKJ

From this passage we see:

1. Demons do not like authoritative people. They usually do not manifest in the first person unless around an authoritative person or when confronted by a person who knows their identity.
2. They are spirits who can live in the bodies of men or women. They do not have their own flesh and bone body (Luke 24:39).
3. They are unclean, meaning that they are not holy and are filthy in habit. We will see more of their habits when we examine their origin. The fact that they are called unclean also indicates that this is one of the criteria they seek in a host.
4. Demons also have a will which is exhibited by the fact that the unclean demon spirit cried out.
5. They do not want to be bothered but lie dormant until discovered.
6. They have an end, meaning that they can and will be destroyed.
7. They are under authority to Jesus and His disciples.
8. They go to church and like to occupy religious people who are ignorant of their methods.

There are many more details about demons that we can learn from other scriptures, but the most relevant

details about them and the key to tracing their origin comes from Luke 11:24. In this scripture, Jesus makes reference to truths found in the book of Enoch.

When an unclean spirit goes out of a man, he goes through dry places, seeking rest; and finding none, he says, "I will return to my house from which I came." Luke 11:24 NKJ

The usage of "going through dry places" and "seeking rest" are the references that show Jesus' knowledge of demons can be traced to the book of Enoch. "Walking through dry places" means that they are terrestrial spirits walking on the face of the "dry earth."

Evil spirits shall they be upon the earth, and the spirits of the wicked shall they be called. The habitation of the spirits of heaven shall be in heaven; but upon earth shall be the habitation of terrestrial spirits, who are born on earth. 1 Enoch 15:8b

Concerning their "unrest," Jesus was referring to 1 Enoch 15:10.

They [evil spirits] shall cause lamentation. No food shall they eat; and they shall be thirsty; they shall be concealed, and shall rise up against the sons of men, and against women for they come forth during the days of slaughter and destruction.¹ 1 Enoch 15:10

This reference "to being thirsty" or "walking in dry places" by the Lord Jesus Christ is also recorded in Matthew 12:43. This shows the rest that demons seek - the rest of being in a body.

When an unclean spirit goes out of a man, he goes through dry places, seeking rest, and finds none. †Matthew 12:43 NKJ

This context of the origin of demons in the book of Enoch is also found in Genesis 6:1-6 where "sons of God" lusted after the daughters of men. The usage of "sons of God" is not referring to actual men, but angels whom God assigned to earth to teach men. According to the book of Enoch and other related Old Testament writings, these sons of God or angels were called "Watchers." They fathered a race of mutated beings which brings us to the origin of this species.

The Origin of Demons

Before going into the origin of demons, perhaps it would be profitable to make note of the book of Enoch. This book gives a complete history of the beginning of the species that we now call "demons." It is directly quoted in Jude 14 (the parallel reference is found in 1 Enoch 1:9) and Peter references it in 2 Peter 2:4 in dealing with angels in Tartarus (1 Enoch 10:4-17). The book of Enoch has been the subject of much discussion. Its authenticity and reliability have been debated for quite some time,² hence, it is not new to controversy. It also gives much background information about the "Watchers" that God assigned to watch over mankind and teach them.

The Ethiopian Jews had always included 1 Enoch, along with Jubilees³ and 3 and 4 Ezra in its canon of the scriptures, but many scholars simply passed Enoch off as a post-Christian, apocryphal book and categorized it with Gnostic texts. Yet, when complete copies of Enoch were found in the Dead Sea Scrolls, which had been preserved and packed away before the birth of Christ, the scholars were forced to take another look at it. Though the facts in Enoch are noteworthy, especially since Jude 14 quotes Enoch, giving it greater credibility, whenever Jesus alludes to it, the significance of further consideration increases dramatically. We are also going to see that the book of Jubilees provides great detail, and in some points, greater specifics than the book of Enoch concerning the origin of demons.

Quotations from Jubilees were found within documents in the Dead Sea Scrolls, which verifies that it also was an early, pre-Christian document. The Jubilees quotations give even more credibility to 1 Enoch and therefore to the Ethiopic canon of scriptures than had been previously considered.

There has been some speculation that these books were intentionally obscured by Satan in an attempt to hide the methods of his operation and the true identity of evil spirits. This suggestion must be considered since 1 Enoch and Jubilees were held in much greater suspicion before the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls. The recovery of their evidence within the Dead Sea Scrolls, establishing their pre-Christian validity, vindicates their reliability. Their recovery, along with that of other manuscripts (such as the War Rules) from the Dead Sea Scrolls, gives greater weight to the possibility that they were intentionally obscured by Satan to hide relevant facts about his methods and operations.

This is not by any means an argument designed to confer upon these books authority equal to the more commonly-accepted canon of the scriptures (although the decision of which books would be included was made somewhat arbitrarily by Gentile scholars in the 4th century). The fact that these records agree with the Bible in these matters - and, equally important, that they do not disagree with the Bible - gives us a greater latitude for consideration. Jesus Christ, the Incarnate Word, made reference to at least these isolated details, and that gives us greater confidence to rely upon them, since He will be the One on the Judgment Seat.

If referring to the book of Enoch bothers some individuals, then they will need to take the matter up with Jesus, Jude, Peter, the Ethiopian Jews and a host of recognized scholars around the world. Furthermore, the explanation Enoch offers perfectly parallels the Genesis records. Concerning the origin of demons, it simply makes sense. If nothing else, the book of Enoch categorically asserts the theology of religious authors (dating back to at least the first century before Christ) who were recognized by Jesus and other New Testament writers. Even on that note alone, it is worthy of further consideration.

1 Enoch and Jubilees chronicle the events before the flood at the time of Noah. The following is a synopsis, supplying the documentation from the particular sources and cross-referencing them to the Bible.

“Watchers,” a category of good angels (Daniel 4:13,17,23), called “sons of God” (Genesis 6:2,4; Job 1:6; 2:1; 38:7) were assigned to earth to teach men (Jubilees 4:15; Daniel 4:13,17). They were assigned to earth and given bodies (1 Enoch 64:1,2; Jubilees 4:15, 22). The Watchers became enthralled with the beauty of women (Genesis 6:1,2; 1 Enoch 7:2ff; Jubilees 4:22; 5:1) and left their first estate (2 Peter 2:4; Jude 1:6). They entered into union with women and had children (Genesis 6:4; Jubilees 5:2; 1 Enoch 15:2-16:1). The children that were begotten from the union of angels and women became giants in the land (Genesis 6:4; Jubilees 5:2; 1 Enoch 15:2-16:1). These giants, also referred to as Nephilim (Genesis 6:4; 1 Enoch 15:9), corrupted the flesh of man (Genesis 6:12) and caused mayhem on the earth (Genesis 6:6,7) to the point it grieved God that He had made man (Genesis 6:6,7).

(Incidentally, if it grieved God that He had made man this indicates that something had happened that was not in His initial plans. It is therefore logical to assume that evil came to pass as a result of the operation of free will instead of God intentionally and directly creating it. This is another reason to consider that these texts were obscured in an attempt by Satan to “accuse” God of creating evil, instead of mankind discovering that Satan was responsible for its existence.)

The book of Enoch also offers an explanation of the connection between the Watchers and Satan. Because Satan knew the prophecy that the seed of the woman would eventually crush his head (Genesis 3:15), it is predictable that Satan would try to corrupt the woman’s lineage in order to prevent the coming of Christ. What better (or more sinister) way to do this than through the Watchers, and the Watchers corrupting women (i.e., the seed of the woman)? It is obvious that the Watchers were tempted to do something contrary to the will of God. This is in perfect parallel with Satan’s tactics to tempt the Watchers with disobedience in order to corrupt the bloodline and lineage of the Messiah, thereby

preventing the fulfilment of prophecy. The book of Enoch relates that the Watchers became messengers of Satan, working with him to corrupt mankind.

...on account of their [the Watchers'] oppressive deeds which they performed as messengers of Satan, leading astray those who dwell on the earth. | Enoch 54:6b

For the sin of corrupting the flesh of men, God punished the disobedient angels by chaining them in Tartarus until the final judgment of the ages (2 Peter 2:4; Jude 14; Jubilees 5:2; 1 Enoch 10:11). He then proceeded to have the giants, at the provocation of obedient angels, begin warring against each other to annihilate each other (1 Enoch 10:9; Jubilees 5:3). The remainder who were not killed in that manner died in the flood.

When God destroyed the earth and the creatures that lived on the face of the earth with the flood, He had mercy on Noah and his sons. Noah and his sons found grace in the sight of the Lord (Genesis 6:8) primarily because Noah was perfect in his generations (Genesis 6:9). The corruption between the Watchers and women had not infiltrated Noah's lineage. The flood was designed to annihilate the corrupted race of man and to leave only a pure lineage on earth afterward.

When the flood destroyed the things on the earth, the giants also were destroyed (Genesis 6:13). The conclusion of the matter is as follows: when the spirits of these mutant hybrids were forced out of their bodies, either by dying before the flood or by drowning at the flood, they had no place to go. Heaven was the place for pure angels and hell the place for evil men. These perverted mongrel beings which did not qualify for either place were left to roam the face of the earth. The spirits of the giants, or Nephilim, were released into the world as spirit-beings with no bodies, looking for a resting place. Even though they have a hybrid nature, they nonetheless still are partially "mankind" and seek the rest of a body (Matthew 12:43; Luke 11:24).

In summary, the spirits of the giants, the Nephilim, are the hybrid offspring of the Watchers and earthly women. When the giants died in the flood, their half-breed spirits had no place to go; therefore, they have no rest. These spirits are what we now refer to as demons. Because 1 Enoch 15:8 says this in a direct statement, there is no room left for speculation.

Now the giants, who have been born of spirit and of flesh, shall be called upon earth evil spirits, and on earth shall be their habitation. Evil spirits shall proceed from their flesh, because they were created from above; from the holy Watchers was their beginning and primary foundation. Evil spirits shall they be upon the earth, and the spirits of the wicked shall they be called. The habitation of the spirits of heaven shall be in heaven; but upon earth shall be the habitation of terrestrial spirits, who are born on earth. | Enoch 15:8

This is the origin of the species that we now call demons. They are not fallen angels, but hybrid beings resulting from crossbreeding between the Watchers and women. 1 Enoch 10:9 aptly refers to them as bastards and the children of fornication. The first occurrence of the word "demon" in either the Bible, 1 Enoch or Jubilees is in Jubilees 7:27 when the (disembodied) spirits of the Nephilim were tormenting the sons of Noah after the flood. The word is again used in chapter 10.

In the third week of that jubilee the polluted demons began to lead astray the children of Noah's sons and to led they to folly and to destroy them. And the sons of Noah came to Noah, their father, and they told him about the demons who were leading astray and blinding and killing his grandchildren. Jubilees 10:1,2

For further documentation that these hybrid spirits of the Watchers and women are "demons." Noah then prays and says to God...

And you know that which your [God's] Watchers, the father of these spirits [demons], did in my days and also these spirits [demons] who are alive... Jubilees 10:4

Since we now know the origin of demons, we can deduce their characteristics, nature and predictable operation. Knowing their nature will help us in understanding our enemy and gaining faith for exercising our authority over them.

The Nature of Demons

Demons are infertile hybrids. They are mutated bastards, birthed outside of the will of God in disobedience, temptation, lust, sin, iniquity and transgression (1 Enoch 10:9). They are invariably bound by their nature. Genesis 6:5 tells us their true nature and how a demon thinks.

Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man [corrupted, mutated man - the Nephilim] was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. Genesis 6:5 NKJ

Jubilees 7:22-24 also chronicles the birth of the Nephilim and thereby the spirits of demons. These verses conclude with the same description as is found in Genesis 6:5.

And they [the Watchers] begot sons, the Naphilim, and all of them were dissimilar. And each one ate his fellow. The giants killed the Naphil, and the Naphil killed the Elyo, and the Elyo mankind and man his neighbor. Jubilees 7:22

Demons are murderers. Their influence then, as well as now, spreads all over mankind.

And everyone [mankind included] sold himself in order that he might do injustice and pour out much blood and the earth was full of injustice. Jubilees 7:23

Verse 24 concludes the description of the wickedness of the Nephilim, the spirits of demons.

And afterward they sinned against beasts, and birds and everything which moves or walks upon the earth. And they poured out much blood upon the earth. And all the thoughts and desires of men were always contemplating vanity [selfishness] and evil. Jubilees 7:24

The account in 1 Enoch 15:9 and 10 gives more information about them. It tells us what these spirits do.

The spirits of the giants shall be like clouds,⁴ which shall oppress, corrupt, fall, content, and bruise the earth. They shall cause lamentation. No food shall they eat; and they shall be thirsty; they shall be concealed [invisible as spirits], and shall rise up against the sons of men and against women, for they come forth during the days of slaughter and destruction. 1 Enoch 15:9-10

Jubilees 5:2 and 3 summarizes both Genesis 6 and 1 Enoch 15.

And they [the women] bore children for them; [the Watchers] and they were giants. And injustice increased upon the earth, and all flesh corrupted its way; man and cattle and beasts and birds and everything which walks on the earth. And they all corrupted their way and their ordinances, and they began to eat one another. And injustice grew upon earth and every imagination of the thoughts of all mankind was thus continually evil. Jubilees 5:2-3

Demons are inextricably bound by their nature which was sealed at the time of their birth. They are accursed bastards who are driven by the iniquitous passions of their fathers, the Watchers. Demons have no rest aside from finding a body in which they can take up residence. In their own bodies, before the flood, they actually began to devour one another, which shows their selfish, blood thirsty nature. They are a race of hybrid beings - half Watcher, half man - selfishly driven and fully devoted to only themselves.

Both 1 Enoch and Jubilees record that the bodies of the Nephilim were enormous, so they consumed all the food they could find and began to eat each other. This is congruous with the voracious and selfish nature of demons. (They also think that they are bigger than they really are.) They demonize people to cause gluttony, alcoholism and perverse habits of all sorts of excesses. Hence, they are creatures of lust.

Also in Jubilees 10:5 and 6, in his prayer to God for protection against demons, Noah says that they were created for destruction.

And do not let them cause corruption among the sons of your servant. Oh my God, because they were created to destroy. Jubilees 10:5-6

This passage explains that the nature of demons is to destroy. They have no positive benefit except when God, with His omniscient will, uses them to perfect mankind through trials brought by them.

1 Enoch 15:9 and 10 show the initial nature of demons, when they were Nephilim, which indicates their current function.

The spirits of the giants shall be like clouds [nephele] which shall oppress, corrupt, fall, content, and bruise upon earth. They shall cause lamentation. No food shall they eat;⁵ and they shall be thirsty; they shall be concealed, and shall rise up against the sons of men and against women; for they came forth⁶ during the days of slaughter and destruction. I Enoch 15:9-10

The nature of a demon's unrest results from its desire to return to a body because it came out of one.

Chapter 16:1 of 1 Enoch reveals God's judgment upon demons. It refers to them being out of a body and without judgment until the final day when their fathers, the Watchers, are to be punished.

And as to the death of the giants [the physical origin of demons], wheresoever their spirits depart from their bodies, let their flesh, that which is perishable, be without judgment. Thus shall they perish, until the day of the great consummation of the great world. A destruction shall take place of the Watcher and the impious. I Enoch 16:1

God, in His mercy, imprisoned the guilty offenders, the Watchers, in Tartarus, but left the spirits of the Nephilim (demons), unchained to roam over the earth until the day of judgment when He will settle the whole matter.

The complete statement given in 1 Enoch 15:8 shows the true identity of demons, that they are not fallen angels, but the spirits of the Nephilim.

Now the giants, who have been born of spirit and of flesh, shall be called upon earth evil spirits, and on earth shall be their habitation. Evil spirits shall proceed from their flesh, because they were created from above; from the holy Watchers was their beginning and primary foundation. Evil spirits shall they be upon earth, and the spirits of the wicked shall they be called. The habitation of the spirits of heaven shall be in heaven, but upon earth shall be the habitation of terrestrial spirits, who are born on earth. I Enoch 15:8

It has been firmly established that demon spirits are terrestrial spirits, and their habitation is upon the earth. Now we will see that demons cannot be confused with principalities and powers because the Bible states that their residency is in the heavens.

Principalities and Powers

We have the same purpose in understanding principalities and powers as with demons - to exercise authority over them with the purpose of establishing the kingdom of God on the earth. These are likewise classified in the same genus - evil, but are a different species with a different origin. Principalities and powers are heavenly, not earthly bound, creatures which is their major difference from demon spirits.

From studying the actual words, “principalities” and “powers,” we can derive some much-needed understanding concerning their functions. Principalities is the Greek word *arche*, which means “first in order and rank.” Power is the Greek word *dynasteia*, which means “exercised strength.” The indication is that the “principalities” are higher ranking evil spirits and the “powers” are lower ranking heavenly beings working to enforce their superiors’ mandates.⁷

Holding in mind the insight that demons are terrestrial spirits who walk the face of the earth, upon re-examining the New Testament, little evidence is found - aside from the fact that they are both evil - that would equate a demon to a principality or power. Demons function on the earth, but principalities and powers function in the heavenlies. The scriptures are very clear about where principalities and powers function.

To the intent that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places, Ephesians 3:10 NKJ

These evil spirits are on the same plane of power and influence as angels.

Who [Jesus] has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, angels and authorities and powers having been made subject to Him. I Peter 3:22 NKJ

For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, Romans 8:38 NKJ

For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. Ephesians 6:12 NKJ

Since we can see that these spirits are different from demons, their origin must likewise be different also. Where they came from is spelled out specifically in the scriptures. These are indeed the third of the angels of heaven who were deposed along with Lucifer when he was cast out of God’s presence.

So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him. Revelation 12:9 NKJ

There has been some debate over this scripture - whether it is referring to the past or the future - because it appears in some ways to have already happened, but in other respects it seems to be a future event. The next verse indicates that this is a prophetic picture of the future that will take place during the Great Tribulation.

Then I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, “Now salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night, has been cast down.” Revelation 12:10 NKJ

This is significant because verse 12 indicates that during the Great Tribulation the principalities and powers along with Satan will be displaced out of the heavenlies and be made to dwell on the earth for

those last seven years. This verse gives further credence to the fact that they presently are dwelling and functioning in the heavenlies.

From an abundance of scriptures it is clear that these evil spirits are operating from the heavenly realm and are influencing earth in different ways than demons do. As we recognize their function, we will be better able to exercise authority over them.

A particular section from the book of Daniel gives crucial insight into the function of principalities and powers and how they war in the heavenlies with angels. This section is the account of Daniel praying and fasting for information about the children of Israel. An angel, apparently a subordinate in the army of Michael the archangel, appears to Daniel and gives focal information about these evil spirits and their functions.

Then he [the subordinate angel] said to me, “Do not fear, Daniel, for from the first day that you set your heart to understand, and to humble

yourself before your God, your words [prayers] were heard; and I have come because of your words. But the prince [principality] of the kingdom of Persia withstood me twenty-one days; and behold, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, for I had been left alone there with the kings of Persia.” Daniel 10:12-13 NKJ

This usage in Daniel 10:12, along with verse 20, shows that these princes are in heavenly conflict with angels. The verses also show that, through prayers, angels are sent to and from heaven with answers to prayers but are sometimes intercepted by principalities and powers. We also see that more prayers mean more angels get into the fray. The end results of circumstances are not “carved in stone” by the “inalterable will of God” as some fatalists communicate.

There is more contributing information in this section of scripture about principalities and powers, but since our emphasis is to show that their origin is different from demons and how to effectively exercise authority over them, we will not elaborate on those details in this article. Suffice it to say, however, that principalities and powers move effectively in governmental strata (i.e., Persia and Greece), and that war is waged against them, not by being cast out, but by displacement through prayer.

Principalities and powers are evil spirits who function in the heavenlies and are in direct conflict with angels. Principalities and powers are the angels who were deposed along with Lucifer. They are categorically not demons. With this information in mind, we will now see how to specifically deal with principalities, powers and demons and how to exercise authority over each one.

Dealing with Demons and Principalities and Powers

Dealing with these evil spirits is a big subject with many mitigating factors. Now that the foundation of their identities has been discovered, we will be able to use some fundamental truths to help us understand how to exercise authority over each category.

Regardless of whether we are dealing with principalities, powers or demons, some common truths apply:

1. Sin gives each of them strength and access into our lives.
2. More prayer means more angels effectively work for us; less prayer means more principalities and powers effectively work against us.
3. Without the power and information given by the Holy Spirit we are helpless.

4. It is only through the blood of Jesus (its atoning power) and the power of the Holy Spirit that we have dominion over evil spirits and are able to subdue them.

Since we have already dealt with identifying the origin of demons after the flood when the spirits of the Nephilim were released, a comparison of two scripture verses, Genesis 1:28 and Genesis 9:1, will document our inability to deal with evil spirits without the help of the Holy Spirit.

Genesis 1:28 gives the initial assignment of mankind over the earth.

Then God blessed them, and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth.” Genesis 1:28 NKJ

After the fall of man, when sin entered and the presence of the Holy Spirit was lost, we see God charging Noah and his sons with a similar commission, yet we find a very important word and portion of the commission is missing.

So God blessed Noah and his sons, and said to them: “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth.” Genesis 9:1 NKJ

The word and commission that is missing is “subdue.” There is good reason for this omission. The presence of the Holy Spirit had been removed, thereby the power to accomplish the “subduing” part of the assignment was missing. It was not until Jesus came and paid the price for sin that the power of the Holy Spirit was again given to mankind and his spiritual ability to subdue this realm was regained.

The Holy Spirit regenerated the spirit of man (Titus 3:5) and made him alive and sensitive to the spirit realm once again. Now the Holy Spirit can equip us with power and lead us in knowledge to make this “subduing” possible.

It is not coincidental that God spoke to Noah and his sons immediately after the flood when demon spirits, the spirits of the Nephilim, were first released into the world. At that time, mankind did not have power and authority over them to subdue them. It was not until Jesus redeemed mankind and made the anointing of the Holy Spirit available that our dominion and ability to subdue this realm returned.

Jesus returned to us the authority over evil spirits. Always remember, though, it is only possible because of the power of the Holy Spirit that abides in us and comes upon us. One verse of scripture spoken by the Master reveals not only His understanding of the categories of principalities, powers and demons, but our authority over them. Jesus said...

Behold, I give you the authority to trample on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you. Luke 10:19 NKJV

In this verse, Jesus referred to principalities as serpents, powers as scorpions, and demons as the power of the enemy. He gave us authority over each and all of them.

Another reference shows the distinction between them as well as our authority over them. These verses also reveal to us how to deal with each category differently.

And these signs will follow those who believe: In My name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues; they will take up serpents; Mark 16:17-18a NKJ

It is apparent that Jesus makes a distinction between these categories of evil spirits. He is talking about

casting out one and taking up the other. He gives us the simplicity of dealing with principalities, powers and demons in this verse alone: we cast out demons, but we take up the battle against principalities and powers by prayer in order to displace them.

The succinct method of dealing with demons from the Word of God is to cast them out. There are 52 usages of the word daimonion in the New Testament Greek text and 75 percent of these are in the context of being cast out. “Cast out” is the Greek word ekballo and it literally means “to throw out.” The reason that demons must be cast out is because they actually seek to live inside of people. The only rest they can find is to inhabit a body.

Demons are spiritual parasites and trespassers. When they are outside of a body, they roam about in dry places (walking over the face of the earth as terrestrial spirits), seeking resting places within human bodies. They will have no rest until the day of judgment when they will join the devil and the fallen angels in the lake of fire (Matthew 25:41). Access inside a person is given to them by the presence of sin or weakness in someone’s body. Where continual sickness or sin exists, quite often this is because of the abiding presence of a demon. It is no coincidence that Jesus gave His disciples authority over demons, sicknesses and weaknesses at the same time because they are so closely related.

And when He had called His twelve disciples to Him, He gave them power [authority] over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease. Matthew 10:1 NKJ

On the other hand, there are eight usages of principalities and powers in the New Testament and none of them are cast out. The reason for this is simple. Demons are different than principalities and powers. Demons live in people on the earth but principalities and powers exercise their dominion in the heavenlies.

Nowhere in scripture is a principality or power cast out. They are displaced by prayers as we saw in Daniel chapter 10. This is in agreement with what Jesus said in Mark 16:18, “to take up serpents.” To take up means “to lift up” as is depicted in the constellation Ophiuchus.⁸ It means to take control and authority over something by lifting it up. This is perfectly described in the commission of binding and loosing:

And I will give you [the church] the keys [authority⁹] of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. Matthew 16:19 NKJV

This is the authoritative power given to the church to enforce the rules and laws of the kingdom of heaven on the earth. We bind principalities away from their influence on earth by loosing angels to war against them in the heavenlies just as in the days of Daniel, when Michael came to fight against the prince of Persia.

Simply stated, demons are cast out of people by a command. Principalities and powers are bound from having influence upon the earth through the vocal orders given through prayers or commands as the Holy Spirit directs individuals.

Conclusion

From the beginning of our study, it has been our expressed desire and intent that we could increase our understanding and therefore our authority over evil spirits. We have learned that demons are the disembodied spirits of the Nephilim (released at the time of the flood) and that principalities and powers are the fallen angels that were deposed at the time of Lucifer's rebellion. They are the same genus - evil, but different species.

We have also seen the proper way to deal with each category. Demons are cast out, whereas principalities and powers are displaced through prayer and commands issued by the Holy Spirit to the church on earth.

Regardless of the category of evil spirit, we need to remember the distinct statement made by the Lord Jesus Himself.

Behold, I give you the authority to trample on serpents [principalities] and scorpions [powers], and over all the power of the enemy [demons], and nothing shall by any means hurt you. Luke 10:19 NKJ

As we have gleaned these truths, we should also be reminded what Jesus said...

"Nevertheless do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven." Luke 10:20 NKJ

He concluded with this explanation.

In that hour Jesus rejoiced in the Spirit and said, "I praise You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from the wise and prudent and revealed them to babes. Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Your sight. All things have been delivered to Me by My Father, and no one knows who the Son is but the Father, and who the Father is but the Son, and the one to whom the Son wills to reveal Him!" Luke 10:21-22 NKJ

Not everyone knows the things you know or has had the truths revealed that you have received. Perhaps this article is part of God's design to educate you so that you can help to free others. That is why Jesus (in Luke 10: 23) turned to his disciples, those to whom He had given authority, those who had been privileged to exercise authority like no others had before them, and said to them privately...

"Blessed are the eyes which see the things you see; for I tell you that many prophets and kings have desired to see what you see, and have not seen it, and to hear what you hear, and have not heard it." Luke 10:23-24 NKJ

We rejoice, not because evil spirits are subject to us, but rather that the Lord has chosen us to learn these things, and especially that we can do something for Him with what we know. Praise the Lord! Yes, our names are written in heaven, and we can help others have their names written there too, as we exercise our spiritual authority over principalities, powers and demons.

Notes:

1 “The Book of Enoch,” a translation by Richard Laurence; obtainable over the Internet from <http://www.takeitbyforce.com/writings.htm>. The Book of Jubilees is also available through this web site.

2 1st Enoch is a pre-Christian work. The like-named counterparts, 2nd and 3rd Enoch, were not found in the Dead Sea Scrolls and thus have been dated as post-Christian, and therefore less assertive on subjects of Judeo-Christian concern. Though the writing styles and some related material is found in 1st Enoch, the books of 2nd and 3rd Enoch have little to do with 1st Enoch except for the name.

3 In The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha, Volume 2, page 47, O.S. Windermute gives an explanation on the origin of evil that comes from the book of Jubilees. He directly attributes the existence of evil to evil spirits and that God is not directly responsible. There is a hint of textual manipulation to obscure these truths. This is a valid question if one considers that Enoch and Jubilees share this insight and were not included in the accepted canon of scripture.

4 “Cloud” is the Greek word *nephele*, a direct derivative of the Hebrew word *Nephilim*.

5 R.H. Charles translation adds here; “but nevertheless shall hunger,” p.43.

6 Ibid. Translation reads “...because they have proceeded from them.”

7 There is some speculation that “powers” are demons since the word *exousia* could mean the ones who enforce the rule of the principalities. The fact remains, however, that they are scripturally defined as heavenly beings.

8 E.W. Bullinger, *Witness of the Stars*, p. 57.

9 “Keys” are used synonymously with the concept of authority in biblical language. The Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible, Volume 3, p. 786.

PART 2

Separating Principalities and Powers (Divide and Conquer)

Principalities and powers are hot topics of discussion in areas where spiritual warfare is being studied and practised. It is becoming more common to hear Christians say, “We are battling principalities and powers for the control of our city.” Thank God we have seen the necessity to engage these evil forces collectively; but now we need to realize these are separate entities, and that we need to attack each of these forces separately to achieve a decisive victory.

As we shall see, principalities and powers do work in conjunction to bring mayhem to the world and division to the church. They are different, however, and it is possible to know much more about each of them. As we define each of these and see their differences and their functions, we will be equipped to war against each of these spiritual forces more effectively, instead of doing generic battle against both of them collectively.

We use the phrase “principlality and power” almost as one word. Have we considered that these are actually different spirit beings, called by different names with different functions? Is the Word of God silent about each of these evil spirits as separate entities, or is there another level of understanding left to explore? Can we learn more about our enemies, how they operate and how to wage war effectually on each of them? Is it possible to discover their differences and then perhaps exploit them and apply the age old axiom of warfare - divide and conquer?

Even though both principalities and powers are evil spirits with similar origins and motives, there are clear distinctions to be made between them, as shown by the Bible consistently calling them different names.

To the intent that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places, Ephesians 3:10

It is my belief that the Word of God is not silent on this issue, but is a complete war manual, revealing the identity and functions of each of these spirits. Furthermore, we can discover their differences and how they work together, as well as how to divide them and break up their collective strength. I believe that the Scriptures reveal how to do to them what they have been doing to God’s people for millennia - divide and conquer.

We use the phrase “principlality and power” almost as one word. Have we considered that these are actually different spirit beings, called by different names with different functions?

The Lord Jesus Christ stated a dynamic concept of warfare when He said a kingdom divided against itself cannot stand (Matthew 12:25-26; Mark 3:24; Luke 11:18). As we press into this study, we will see that unity is the underlying strength of both God’s Kingdom and the evil kingdom. We will also discover the Bible records Jesus using the word “church” only twice in His earthly ministry. On both occasions He referred to the principle of “binding and loosing.” One usage reveals how to battle principalities, the other demonstrates how to battle powers.

It is quite apparent from the Word of God that these evil spirits do exist - and that wrestling them and dealing with them is inevitable. Whether we will succeed or not depends upon either being aware of or being ignorant of Satan's devices (2 Corinthians 2:11). Let us learn from the Word of God how to Triumph in Christ Jesus. We will need to be courageous, obediently engage these evil spirits, and answer our call to arms.

Our Call to Arms

Ephesians 3:10 conclusively states that principalities and powers are different entities. Before going on to define each of these, we need to recognize something else - God chose the church to demonstrate His manifold wisdom to them - and that engaging them is not optional.

From the context of Ephesians 3:10 we learn that God once had a mystery. He kept it secret for a reason. It was His intention that when this secret was revealed, then principalities and powers would know that through His infinite wisdom He had foiled their futile plans. Showing these principalities and powers His wisdom was one of His primary purposes in the whole plan of redemption.

And to make all people see what is the fellowship of the mystery; which from the beginning of the ages has been hidden in God who created all things through Jesus Christ: to the intent that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places, according to the central purpose which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Ephesians 3:9-11)

The background of this mystery reveals God's plan for us to exercise our authority over principalities and powers. In the time preceding the creation of mankind, a mutiny was attempted in heaven. Satan plotted an overthrow of God's throne by deceiving a third of the angels into rebelling against God. God banished them out of heaven (Revelation 12:9). These deposed angels are now the principalities and powers. God then preceded to make a new race of spirit-beings called man,¹ and put them upon earth, the same place He banished these evil angels. The purpose for God putting both principalities and powers and people in the same place is: He intentionally wanted the church to teach them the lesson of His sovereignty and wisdom.

God also knew that mankind would temporarily fall from their place of ruler-ship and would be dominated by these evil angels until Jesus reconciled mankind to God and reinstated them as God's rulers over the spirit realm.

Now we can understand why God kept His plan a mystery. The secret was that God knew the evil angels would revolt against Him and that they would dominate mankind for awhile. By His foreknowledge however, He already had a plan waiting in the wings to show them the futility of their efforts. He planned our dominion over the principalities and powers through Jesus Christ. This is nothing more than the testimony of the Word of God.

Every time we exercise authority over principalities and powers, our Father God gets this sly little smile curling the corners of His lips. God wants the church to display His wisdom and rub it in their faces. He wants us to remind them of their sin of stupidity - attempting mutiny against the omniscient God. This is a major facet of God's eternal purpose in the whole plan of Christianity. He wants these principalities and powers taught a lesson.

Each time we bind these evil forces and command them to bow down to the name of Jesus, they are reminded of the omniscient wisdom of our superior God. They chose to rebel against Him and He knew it all along. In His manifold wisdom, God had presupposed their plan and had the church, by His foreknowledge, waiting in the wings to fulfil His own good pleasure of retribution. God wants us

to exercise our authority over principalities and powers! God rejoices when we dominate them. Jesus further declared our authority over them and our call to arms.

Jesus derogatorily referred to principalities and powers as serpents and scorpions. This is a demeaning usage of words, meaning they are cursed, low-life cowards. Not only do these names tell us about the attributes and characteristics of these creatures, but they also belittle them and show that we have authority over them.

Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents (principalities) and scorpions (powers), and over all power of the enemy (demons): and nothing shall by any means hurt you. Luke 10:19

In Mark 16:18 we see the Commander-in-Chief referring to these evil spirits as serpents and giving all of His soldiers a command to take up the battle against them.

“..they shall take up serpents” Mark 16:18a

This is not talking about handling snakes as many have supposed, but taking up the battle against the evil spirit world. It does not say to do this if it is convenient, but this is a command into battle from the Captain of Salvation. When Jesus said to “take up serpents,” He was referring to the Word of God written in the stars in the constellation of Ophiuchus. ²

Ophiuchus, within the constellation of Scorpio, is seen taking up a serpent, or principality and wrestling it (Ephesians 6:12), while crushing a scorpion, or spiritual power, under his foot (Ephesians 1:22). This bold display in the heavens is a prophetic message to follow our leader, Jesus Christ, the Serpent Seizer and Scorpion Crusher and to take up this battle. When we do, God performs His good pleasure”.

And the God of peace will crush Satan under your feet shortly. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen Romans 16:20.

This call to arms is well published and documented from God’s eternal purposes recorded in His Word, all the way to revealing it prophetically in the stars. We are commissioned by God Almighty Himself to engage the enemy. Now we need courage and a reminder to take up this battle. Christians that are not actively involved in this aspect of spiritual warfare are literally “sitting ducks” waiting for heavenly principalities and powers to rain down their terror and destruction. In this war, you are either a target or a weapon.

Most Christians have experienced the futility of wrestling with the flesh to try to gain control of situations. For much too long we have been trying to gain ground in the spiritual conquest by controlling the physical circumstances first. This is like playing “king of the mountain.” The only way that we are going to dominate the physical plane is to control the higher plane, in this case, the heavenlies. Spiritual warfare is showing the church that if you control the heavens, then you can patrol the streets.

From Cali, Columbia to South Korea, many cities and countries around the world have borne testimony that we can gain control of our areas by wrestling these spiritual forces. Ephesians 6:12 tells us that we must wrestle principalities and powers. This is our call to arms. Wrestling, more than any other sport, demands the use of every part of the body. We need every part and member of the body of Christ functioning in full measure to gain the victory we should have. This foreshadows our solution to the problem: UNITY!

It is God's good pleasure that we show principalities and powers the manifold wisdom of God through exercising our spiritual authority over them. Jesus gave us the authority over them; the Holy Spirit gives us the power and specifics about them; and the Word of God shows us how to engage in battle. Now it is our responsibility to obey our call to take up arms and to "take up serpents,"

Definitions of Principalities and Powers

The Bible is very clear that both principalities and powers are heavenly beings. Failing to differentiate them from demons has also compounded the problem of not knowing exactly how to engage the enemy.³ Ephesians 6:12 shows that these principalities and powers occupy the heavens and that they are not flesh and blood.

For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. Ephesians 6:12

Likewise, Colossians 1:16 reveals their heavenly existence and also shows that they are invisible.

For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions (visible on the earth) or principalities or powers (invisible in the heavenlies). All things were created through Him and for Him. Colossians 1:16

The origin of these invisible spiritual beings that occupy the heavenlies, are the fallen angels that were thrown out of heaven when Lucifer was deposed.

His (the Serpent's or Dragon's) tail drew a third of the stars (angels) of heaven and threw them to the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman who was ready to give birth, to devour her Child as soon as it was born. Revelation 12:4

These spirits, principalities and powers, compromise the leadership of the evil kingdom. They work to impose Satan's methods on the earth (Ephesians 6:11). The strength of any army is in its leadership. An obvious strategy of warfare is to attack the leadership in order to disrupt the chain of command. It is then easy to disorientate the troops, discomfort them and attack any isolated units.

Now that we know who these spirits are, and the realm in which they function, we can begin exploring the scope of the Bible to gain information about the leadership in Satan's army. Be reminded: we are studying this, not only to discover their functions and divide and conquer them, but ultimately to build the Kingdom of God where these strongholds have existed. We need to know how and where they function.

Functions of Principalities and Powers

We will begin by looking at what the actual words "principalities" and "powers" mean. As we examine these words, we can see their relationship and interaction with each other. We can also learn of their specific attributes from Jesus' derogatory reference to serpents and scorpions. After defining who they are and their relationship to each other, we will look at each of them separately to discover their individual function and contribution to Satan's kingdom.

"Principality" is the Greek word arche. This means "first in order or rank," or "to commence or initiate something." We can see this in the usage of archangel - meaning the first in rank. Satan has organized his kingdom like God's. Its first order of rank is an arche, or a principality. This is therefore the first tier of leadership in the evil kingdom, directly under Satan himself. Principalities are rulers over the evil powers. Ephesians 6:12 says that they are, "world rulers of darkness."

“Powers” is the Greek word *exousia*. The overall meaning of this word is “an authority,” indicating “one who carries out the directives of a ruler.” The generic word “power” denotes strength to perform a task, but this word also communicates the authority to do it. These powers more specifically are “authorities,” assigned to carry out the specified directives coming from Satan through the ruling principality.

These words show the relationship between these two evil entities. One is a ruler, the other is an enforcer. The New International Version of the Bible translates these words quite precisely to indicate this relationship.

His (God’s) intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms, Ephesians 3:10 NIV

The earthly relationship between magistrates and policemen depicts the corresponding relationship between principalities and powers by a Biblical description that uses these exact words, *arche* and *exousia*. The King James Version translates them as rulers and authorities.

Put them (the people) in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work, Titus 3:1 KJV

Remind them to be subject to rulers and authorities, to obey, to be ready for every good work, Titus 3:1 KJV

These are identical usages of the same words and shows that a relationship between a ruler and an authority is the same relationship as between a principality and a power. This is the same relationship that a magistrate or a judge has with a policeman. Principalities are the rulers and powers are the enforcers. The point to understand from these scriptures is that principalities are of a higher rank and give orders for authorities, or powers, to carry out.

In an organization, whether it is an army or a manufacturing firm, a potential for division exists between management and labour, or between administration and production. A breakdown in this relationship will certainly spell destruction. We need to create a labour dispute, or a strike, to disrupt this relationship.

The importance of dividing these evil spirits and disrupting their relationship is becoming clear. Anytime two things are joined together, whether it is two boards nailed together or two pieces of material sewn together, a weakness exists where they are joined. Professional quarterbacks plan pass plays to expose the weakness of seams in a zone defence. Wrecking crews detonate their charges at critical intersections of structure within buildings. Just as Satan has divided the church between relationships, now we can see an opportunity to divide his kingdom in the same way, in the relationships between principalities and powers.

How These Spirits Work

Though principalities and powers have particular areas where they work, they both work in a similar way - from the heavenlies. Demons are the evil spirits that invade people’s bodies. Principalities and powers normally do not work inside a person’s body, but in the air or atmosphere around them. Ephesians 2:2 reveals interesting facts about how the devil and these deposed spirits work.

In which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, Ephesians 2:2

Even though this verse may be dealing with Satan, it also applies to the spirits thrown out of the heaven with him. Satan, along with these spirits, operates within the authority of the air, not the bodies of

me and women. The phrase “prince of the power of the air” gives us the understanding that these evil spirits exercise their strength through controlling the “atmosphere.” “Prince” is our word for principality, archon, and exousia.

The word “air” aer shows us WHERE they work.

The word “air” means the space above the ground. This reaffirms what we learned before - that principalities and powers occupy the heavenlies. Other usages of the word “air” give us more scope about the realm in which these spiritual forces work. We will meet Jesus in the “air” (1 Thessalonians 4:17), and we fight not as ones that “beat the air” (1 Corinthians 9:26). Specifically, 1 Corinthians 14:9 says that when we speak words they go into the air. This gives us more information about how to effectively engage these spiritual powers. They war on us from the heavenlies or from the air, so we will need to return fire into the realm where they are found. We do not fight as one that simply beats the air, but we must know how to strike the objects in the air.

Going back to Ephesians 2, verse 1, we can learn more about how evil spirits work. People dead in sins and trespasses, or not regenerated by the new birth, are especially prone to the influence of these principalities and powers. Verse 2 shows that prior to the new birth, we were all programmed to walk according to the influence of these spirits. Verse 3 says that by nature (since the spirit of man was not yet regenerated) it was relatively easy for them to control our flesh and minds before we were regenerated into eternal life in Christ.

These spirits influence people by controlling the atmosphere around them, not by invading their bodies. Through principalities and powers, the devil prepares people for the abode of demons (which actually enter the body). Ultimately, actions will be influenced; but it all begins with a manifestation in people that can be seen in their “attitudes.”

Knowledge of the spirit realm gives us the keys to understand how these spirits influence the atmosphere around people and their attitudes. Principalities and powers, as spirit beings, have the capacity to speak words into the air and thereby into the spirit consciousness of men and women. Since most men and women (especially those who are not born again) are ignorant of the spirit realm, these spirits have easy access to them. This also applies to uninstructed Christians who do not know the difference between the soul and the spirit of man. Unregenerated mankind or uninstructed Christians often adopt the world’s terminology and interpret these suggestions as arising from the subconscious level of the human mind.

The picture of the evil spirit on one shoulder and the good angel on the other shoulder whispering to the spirit of man or woman is not too far from the reality of how these spirits work. When they manipulate an individual into habitual sin, demons can (and probably will) enter that person. When enough individuals are influenced in certain ways, as directed by principalities and carried out by powers, an area becomes saturated with the methodia (methods, wiles) of the devil, whether it is lust, murder, alcoholism, homosexuality or fear.

Since principalities and powers are moving the methods of the devil (Ephesians 6:11,12), the armour of God (Ephesians 6:13-17) is the logical defensive tool to guard against evil thought suggestions. Truth, righteousness, peace, salvation, and faith guard the mind, or the conscious level of the spirit. As we will see, the spoken word of God (Ephesians 6:17,18) is our offensive weapon against them because it unleashes power into the realm of their existence - the air or the heavenlies.

That is how these spirits “work over” a person. Now we will see how each of these evil spirits concentrates upon certain areas. Then we will more clearly understand how to battle against them, and displace the strongholds they have claimed over our countries, cities, churches and homes.

Specific Functions of Principalities

We know from the definition of the word arche that principalities are high-ranking evil spirits. These are not the spirits that torment baby Christians or skid-row Joe, anymore than you find Generals of the army in a foxhole. They are heavenly beings that exercise their might over large areas of the world and also upon influential people. Ephesians 6:12 calls them “rulers of the darkness.”

Perhaps the most fundamental usage and description of a principality found in the Bible comes from the book of Daniel. There are two separate ones mentioned and each is called by name. The information that we can gather from this source will help us understand how these evil spirits influence whole areas of the world, not just a single individual or two.

Daniel was praying and fasting for revelation concerning what was going to happen to the nation of Israel. They had been in captivity in Babylon and according to the prophecy of Jeremiah, were due to be released after 70 years. Daniel was in prayer for God to give him revelation about the future of the nation. An angel was dispatched with the message.

Then he (the angel) said to me, “Do not fear, Daniel, for from the first day that you set your heart to understand, and to humble yourself before your God, your words were heard; and I have come because of your words. “But the prince (principality) of the kingdom of Persia withstood me twenty-one days; and behold, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, for I had been left alone there with the kings of Persia. (Daniel 10:12,13)

We can learn many things from this portion of scripture. First, there are spiritual forces set in array to prevent our prayers from being answered. Perseverance, therefore is the solution to getting answers. Next, this angel was left alone because only Daniel was praying. When more people pray, angels come. Also, since Daniel was praying for Israel and since Persia was ruling over Israel at the time (see Daniel 10:1), we see that principalities are governmental and directly aligned against the fulfilment of prophecy, especially against the nation of Israel.

This action of the principality is directly in line with the methods of the devil and all other principalities. Satan has his whole kingdom, including principalities and powers, set in array against Israel. This is not just because they are the apple of God’s eye, but because they are the key to God’s prophetic time clock - and when it is fulfilled, Satan’s doom will be certain. The principality of Persia and, as we will see, the principality of Greece, were and would be dominators of Israel. Remember that principalities are rulers, orchestrators of the darkness of this world (Ephesians 6:12), and they work in tandem with powers to bring world ruler-ship to Satan.

From this record we also see that this angel was confronted by a principality. Good angels and principalities are antagonists. They war for the supremacy of the heavens. (This is another clue about how to successfully war against them - with the keys to the kingdom of heaven.) It was Michael, the chief prince, or archangel, who helped the good angel get through with the message.

Therefore we see that it takes an archangel to effectively engage a principality, and that archangels and principalities are in direct conflict. (Since we know God’s forces are superior, perhaps we can begin to deduce that the church has not enjoyed all the victories we could have, because we have been missing vital understanding about the role we are meant to play.)

Another consideration is that this prince of Persia was ruling over a geographical and political area. This relates to the description given in Ephesians 6:12, “a ruler of the darkness of this world.” These evil spirits are certainly governmental in function, too. This is further documented in the next usage within Daniel.

Then he (the good angel) said, “Do you know why I have come to you? And now I must return to fight with the prince of Persia; and when I have gone forth, indeed the prince of Greece will come.” Daniel 10:20

In the prophecy given to Daniel, the four kingdoms, Babylon, Persia, Greece and Rome all represent the dominators of Israel. It appears that these kingdoms had evil-spirit princes over each of them. This reveals the function of a principality - to influence large groups of people and geographical areas.

Principalities influence large geographical or governmental areas in a combination of two ways. First, they administer the methods of the devil through the powers and demons that are assigned to them and to specific areas. Secondly, the principality personally influences key figures, usually political or religious leaders, to orchestrate the administration of evil policies from the top echelon. These two ways work in combination by issuing mandates from top leadership while powers and demons work to strengthen the grass roots substructure.

We have seen from Ephesians 2:2 how these evil spirits work on someone. A prime example of a principality working on a key governmental figure is the ruler of Tyre. Moving him from behind the scenes was not just a principality, but Satan himself. You can see from these two verses of scripture that Satan had influenced this leader into thinking just like Satan thinks. Verse 2 shows the man and verse 12 shows the devil that influenced the man.

“Son of man, say to the ruler of Tyre, “This is what the Sovereign LORD says: “In the pride of your heart you say, “I am a god; I sit on the throne of a god in the heart of the seas.” But you are a man and not a god, though you think you are as wise as a god. Ezekiel 28:12 NIV

“Son of man, take up a lamentation for the king of Tyre, and say to him, “Thus says the Lord God: “You were the seal of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty. Ezekiel 28:12

It should be logical that a major evil spirit power was influencing Nebuchadnezzar, the King of Babylon. Likewise it is obvious that political leaders like Adolph Hitler, or Saddam Hussein, or religious leaders like the Dalai Lama or Si Babbah have evil spirit influence upon them to garner and control such large followings.

Because principalities work overtime to influence key individuals in geographical areas, we are exhorted to pray for our leaders (1 Timothy 2:1,2). The reason is that we may live a quiet and peaceable life in godliness and honesty free from influence of principalities upon our governmental leaders.

In regard to the usages of principalities in the book of Daniel, it is also interesting that an angelic power was working with Michael, the prince or archangel, to help Daniel gain this understanding. The relationship between the prince Michael and this good angel also illustrates the working relationship between principalities and powers (since they are fallen angels).

But I tell you what is noted in the Scripture of Truth. (No one upholds me (the angelic power) against these, except Michael your prince) Daniel 10:21

This angelic being was strengthened and helped by the prince Michael. Likewise, principalities come to the aid of powers to stop movements of God in certain areas.

An example of a principality coming to the aid of a power from the evil side is found within an account in Acts 19. The principality, Diana of the Ephesians, came to the aid of the spiritual power (influencing the sons of Sceva the High Priest) when Paul’s ministry through the Holy Spirit made a mockery of

the evil spirit power. As revival broke out and evil was exposed, the principality came to the aid of the deposed power (to incite a riot in an attempt to take the life of Paul). We find that Diana, the principality, was worshipped throughout all Asia and not just in Ephesus (Acts 19:27). We also see that a spiritual power was working on Sceva, the High Priest, and his family.

(It would be a tragedy to get this close to mentioning Diana of the Ephesians without taking a shot at her. This principality is referred to as “Queen of Heaven.”)

Though this spirit operates under many names and guises, it influences every culture in the world. We see the queen represented as the Mother of all Harlots in Revelation 17 and 18. This will be the last principality exposed and destroyed during the wrath of God upon the earth. One of her major attributes is making the rich very wealthy and the poor very poor. Its strength began in Babylon as the prince of Babylon and moved from there to Persia, Greece and on to Rome.⁴ From Rome its influence has moved around the world. This principality ties together commerce and religion and its destruction will expose the idolatry of merchandizing and greed, the original sin of Lucifer.⁵

This incident from the book of Acts happened at the crescendo of the first century church and it illustrates the potential of dominating the spiritual realm and deposing principalities. The inter-relationship between the principality of Diana of the Ephesians and the spiritual power collaborate together.

The Word of God is very clear and gives abundant information about principalities; the same is true of spiritual powers. They are the arm of the devil whereby he focuses on local areas and key people to give strength to his kingdom.

Specific Functions of Spiritual Powers

The translation “spiritual power” is much too generic to describe these evil spirits. As we have previously mentioned, the NIV translation of this Greek word *exousia* as an “authority” means that an authority or a power is carrying out a directive. The actual definition implies this is a subordinate evil spirit carrying out orders from a ruling principality.

Finding where these powers work is simple. Look at God’s duly recognized authorities and this is where you will find these assigned protagonists functioning. If you ask, “Where can the most potential damage to the kingdom of God be done?” Your answer is where you will find these spirits. Although this may vary somewhat in different cultures, these evil spirits usually function in spiritual nerve centres such as in churches, in ministers’ homes, within specific families, and schools.

It should come as no surprise to find these evil spirits hanging around churches and ministers, since these are key areas that potentially present the most trouble for the satanic kingdom. Documentation of this truth from the Word of God is abundant, especially if we can see the true function of a spiritual authority’s counterpart from the Kingdom of God.

The direct corollary to the spiritual authorities opposing God’s people are the angels called “ministering spirits” in God’s kingdom. Ministering spirits function to comfort, aid, strengthen and protect God’s people. Don’t think for a minute that the devil has ever invented anything original. The function of a spiritual power is simply the counterfeit of a ministering spirit.

Then the devil left Him, and behold, angels came and ministered to Him. Matthew 4:11

Ministering spirits also war for you.

But to which of the angels has He ever said: “Sit at My right hand, till I make Your enemies Your footstool”? Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation? Hebrews 1:13,14

In addition, we find that these ministering spirits played a major role as messengers before the coming of the Holy Spirit as our Helper. This is what was happening with respect to Daniel. The angel dispatched from heaven with the message for Daniel was a ministering spirit. Not only did he bring him a message, but he also strengthened Daniel.

Then again, the one having the likeness of a man touched me and strengthened me. And he said, “Oh man greatly beloved, fear not! Peace be to you; be strong, yes, be strong!” So when he spoke to me I was strengthened, and said, “Let my lord speak, for you have strengthened me.” Daniel 10:18,19

So just as ministering spirits are assigned to help people, spiritual powers are assigned to hinder them. We can deduce that if ministering spirits strengthen, the spiritual powers weaken. If ministering spirits comfort, then spiritual powers discourage or confuse. If ministering spirits bring messages, spiritual powers deceive with false messages.

Principalities are in direct conflict with archangels and spiritual powers are in direct opposition to ministering spirits.

Revelation chapters 2 and 3 emphasize the focus of spiritual powers upon churches and ministers. Seven churches are addressed in Revelation 2 and 3. Five of these mention direct evil spirit activity on the church and ministers and the other two show symptoms of them functioning.

Ephesus was influenced by a spirit of Nicolaitans;
Smyrna had individuals within the church from the synagogue of Satan;
Pergamos had the influence of a spirit of Balaam and Nicolaitans;
Thyatira had a spirit of Jezebel seducing the prophets and teachers;
Sardis was influenced by a spirit of lethargy (they were dead);
Philadelphia had the influence of the synagogue of Satan upon them;
Laodicea had been bought off by merchandising and was therefore lukewarm.

These effects were bought about by wicked spiritual powers working on the particular churches and ministers.

It is worthy of mention that even though the spirits of Jezebel and Balaam were certainly at work in some of these churches, this is by no means the full extent of the kinds of spirits that work on churches. These spirits were called by those names to describe their attitudes - what the spiritual powers were doing. There could have been a spirit of Saul, named for the Old Testament king, if the church was under the influence of pride and vanity, or a spirit of Eli, named for the Old Testament priest, if the church was full of fear and lacking commitment for the confrontation. The title of the spirit is not the actual name for the spirit, but how the spirit is affecting the church.

From Revelation we have seen how these spirit powers attack churches and ministers. The Bible is full of examples of evil spirits attacking legitimate authorities:

Paul had the messenger, or angel, of Satan buffeting him (2 Corinthians 12:7);
Peter was rebuked when Jesus said to him, “Get behind me Satan” (Matthew 16:23);
Judas fell prey to Satan when he betrayed Jesus (John 13:27); and
Job was crushed under evil spirit attack when he feared (Job 3:25).

Ministers should realize that they are targets for these spiritual powers in spiritual warfare. I once heard Joyce Meyer accurately say, “Different level, different devil.” This kind of attack was verified when Jesus said to Peter, “Satan has desired thee.” It is to be expected. As the old saying goes, “It comes with the turf.” Don’t get scared; get prepared.

Perhaps you have heard of “religious spirits.” These are another aspect of spiritual powers. Certain evil spirit authorities are proficient in working within religious systems. We can certainly see them working upon religious hierarchy in Jesus’ time - and if they were effective then, they surely will be now. They are especially adept at twisting doctrine and affecting the atmosphere through arrogance and envy. It was these spirits working on the scribes and Pharisees that caused them to be envious and hateful toward Jesus. The same function and influence was evident among the elders in Jerusalem when James and the elders were jealous of Paul. These spirits are spiritual powers working under the direction of a principality to cause dissension and division within the church.

If you, as a minister, are reading this and thinking about how others are deceived and not considering that you also might be, you may be under the influence of a religious spirit even now. One of their main tricks is to get you to think you are better than anyone else, and/or that you have real “corner” on the truth.

Ministers’ families are continually under spiritual attack from these powers, too. We only have to go as far as Genesis 3 to find out that the back door access to mankind was gained through a wife. Also, in Acts 19:14 it was the seven sons of Sceva, a chief priest, who were under deep spiritual attack and gross deception. It is no coincidence when ministers or their wives were caught in sexual improprieties or deceitful dealings so often. Likewise it is no coincidence that “preacher’s kids” are sometimes the worst behaved. This is evidence of an attack. Instead of “finishing off” our leaders and war heroes, we should do our best to restore these people, since they are casualties and victims, not enemies.

There is also a ploy of Satan to target schools and the education of the youth in any culture. This function is not limited to the school grounds or the classroom, but includes all the education of youth - from textbooks to television. The usage of “doctrines (or teachings) of demons” from 1 Timothy 4:1 is sufficient documentation to validate this intended target for these spiritual powers.

This listing of churches, ministers, ministers’ families, and schools is by no means the full extent of their directed efforts. Powers may target prestigious, wealthy individuals that will disseminate doctrines of demons through their lifestyles and habits. For example, they could be bankers, athletes or movie stars. These evil-spirit powers, working under a principality, may even promote people sensitive to them so that the person gains more exposure, a higher rank, or a greater notoriety to become more influential.

In summary, these evil spirit powers, exousia, are spirits directed to infiltrate society and gain access to people who will help promote the course and methods of the principality. Their prime targets are churches and ministers, since these are the only real enemies they have. As these spirits work together with principalities, methods of the devil are spread over the world.

Our quest is to divide these spirits and weaken their hold on countries, cities, and churches, so that the kingdom of God may be built and established.

How Principalities and Powers Work Together

We have seen from the book of Daniel how a ministering spirit was aided by the prince, Michael, an archangel. Likewise, principalities and powers work together to accomplish their desired results in the world. Knowing that principalities work over larger geographical areas and spiritual powers are

assigned to key people (especially influential leaders) will help us recognize Biblical examples where these spirits worked together.

The account of Paul in Ephesus shows principality coming to the aid of a spiritual power. By exposing the religious spirit, or spiritual power over the family of Sceva, a major advantage was gained. Acts 19:20 records that after burning the curious arts so mightily grew the Word of God and prevailed.” The principality of Diana of the Ephesians came to the aid of the spiritual power and incited a riot under the guise of “money.” But the actual issue was worship. If it were not for the church restraining Paul, he may have been killed. Don’t you think that the principality had anticipated Paul might react in such a manner? The principality came to the aid of the defeated power and set up a scenario to annihilate Paul.

Another example is when Elijah cut off the heads of the prophets of Baal. When this momentum was gained over the spiritual powers of the religious leaders, the principality, working through Jezebel, threatened Elijah’s life (1 Kings 19:2). This bold move by the principality took Elijah out of the spiritual conquest for awhile. This is another example of how the principality came to the aid of the powers when the powers had suffered a severe defeat.

We can draw an interesting observation from these two accounts. The church saved Paul’s life; but Elijah had no one to stand with him and he almost died. If Elijah had more people standing with him in prayer, perhaps the heavens would have bowed down and the affair might have ended differently. More prayers mean more angels (specifically warring ministering spirits) would have been involved. This could be why Jesus asked the disciples to pray with Him in the garden of Gethsemane the night of his betrayal. Angels did come and strengthen Him. Perhaps if more people had been alert to pray with Him, more angels would, or could, have responded.

Another example of a principality coming to the aid of a power is found when Jesus made a mockery of the religious spirits over the scribes and Pharisees in Jerusalem. The principality of Rome came to the aid of the spiritual power and finally took Jesus’ life. The same scenario existed with respect to Paul when he continually confounded the religious leaders. The final straw came when Paul was executed by the Roman authorities. They were no doubt working under the influence of the same principality.

An Old Testament Profile of Principalities and Powers

As we look into this profile, remember that the Old Testament communicates spiritual truths through physical analogies. It will become quite obvious that this profile was given in the Word of God not only to show us the relationship between principalities and powers, but how to defeat them through unity.

The battle for supremacy in the heavens is described in a physical profile in the Old Testament within the book of Nehemiah. Nehemiah typifies the authority given to each believer by the King, the Lord Jesus Christ. Wherever you are, you are in charge, by divine proclamation from the King of Glory.

Similarly, wherever you have been placed in charge, you have the order to displace the previous ruler and authority. This was illustrated by the direct conflict between Nehemiah and the previous authorities, Sanballat and Tobiah. Sanballat represents the principality and Tobiah the power of the authority.

The characters reveal to us the functions and operations of principalities and powers. Sanballat was the previous ruler and Tobiah carried out his orders by infiltrating the priestly order. As you read the book of Nehemiah, you can see many examples of how they worked together.

Nehemiah was given the authority to oversee the general area of Jerusalem by the King. He prayed and sought the Lord for this authority. When it was given to him, he went to Jerusalem to exercise

his authority. The previous leader, Sanballat, was there to immediately question his authority and to undermine his efforts.

When Sanballat the Horonite and Tobiah the Ammorite official heard of it, they were deeply disturbed that a man had come to seek the well-being of the children of Israel. Nehemiah 2:10

Principalities and powers are disturbed and will join forces to prevent you from bringing well-being to the church. They will belittle your work.

But when Sanballat the Horonite, Tobiah the Ammonite official, and Geshem the Arab heard of it, they laughed us to scorn and despised us, and said, "What is this thing that you are doing? Will you rebel against the king?" Nehemiah 2:19

They will also question your authority and try to make your work look hopeless. However, as unity grows and a momentum develops, they will conspire against you and try to generate confusion and distraction.

It happened, when Sanballat, Tobiah, the Arabs, the Ammonites, and the Ashdolites heard that the walls of Jerusalem were being restored and the gaps were beginning to be closed, that they became very angry, and all of them conspired together to come and attack Jerusalem and create confusion. Nehemiah 4:7,8

They will send information to you to distract you and make you afraid.

Then I perceived that God had not sent him (Shemiah, a puppet sent by Sanballat and Tobiah) at all, but that he pronounced this prophecy against me because Tobiah and Sanballat had hired him. For this reason he was hired, that I should be afraid and act that way and sin, so that they might have occasion for an evil report, that they might reproach me Nehemiah 6:12,13.

Notice that Sanballat and Tobiah worked in conjunction to bring a reproach against Nehemiah. This is exactly how principalities and powers work in tandem to introduce confusion and division.

In addition to learning about working relationships between principalities and powers, Nehemiah also shows us how powers work undercover, in stealth. We see this by Tobiah disguising himself and infiltrating the priesthood. This describes the function of a spiritual power known as a "religious spirit."

Nehemiah 7:61 and 62 shows that the credentials of Tobiah were found as false and that by deception he had gained his position. Verse 64 then reports that he was expelled from the priesthood. Chapter 13:4-8 shows also that Tobiah had gained allegiance with the high priest and was receiving wages and supplies that actually belonged to the true Levites.

This is typical of a religious spiritual power. They will influence a church through deception and will siphon funds and supplies away from its true purposes. Cloaking themselves and working in obscurity are the attributes of a scorpion, which Jesus referred to as spiritual powers in Luke 10:19.

The physical actions of Tobiah that relate to the operations of a spiritual power are also noticeable in the habits of a scorpion. First, scorpions feed at night and try to operate undetected. This is like Tobiah and also religious spirits working undercover in a church. When a scorpion is discovered, it will cleverly cloak itself as an inert, innocent egg-shaped ball (Luke 11:12) by curling itself into a ball and lying dormant. This is how religious spirits work in churches - like Tobiah did. They do not manifest themselves around any light but will feed upon victims that are blinded to their presence.

However, as soon as one is discovered, it will go silent and remain passive until the danger goes away.

Another characteristic of a religious spiritual power, similar to that of a scorpion, is that it is very aggressive about its territory and will defend itself by killing any other scorpion invading its space. This shows that spiritual powers and religious spirits will battle against each other within the same church, not thinking to spare the church. They will do anything to win their point of view. When put in a situation of inevitable defeat, the scorpion will sting itself to death rather than be captured or killed by another. This is also typical of a religious spirit. It will hardly ever reveal its presence, but when detected will consume itself with its own poison rather than be exposed.

The victory over Sanballat and Tobiah (the principality and spiritual power warred against in the book of Nehemiah) was accomplished by the unity of the whole population of Jerusalem. The key to winning in our conquest over evil spirit forces is also unity. Nehemiah could never have rebuilt the walls around Jerusalem by himself alone, and likewise no individual can effectively wage war against these factors without the support of his church (and ultimately in conjunction with other local churches in the same area).

Warring Against Principalities and Powers

When battling these spiritual forces, there are two truths that immediately emerge as “the gospel.” First, Jesus disarmed these heavenly, evil, spirit-beings through the power of the cross and made a spiritual display by making them bow before Him”

Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it. Colossians 2:15

Secondly, as Benjamin Franklin said, “We must hang together, or most assuredly, we will all hang separately.” The deciding factor for victory against these evil spirits is UNITY.

Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. Ephesians 4:3

Scripture tells us we have the victory over these invisible forces through Jesus Christ. (1 Corinthians 15:57). It is God’s pleasure that we, the church, should show them His infinite wisdom through us (Ephesians 3:10). Jesus told us we should exercise our authority over them (Luke 10:19). Therefore, our lack of unity must be a major reason why the church has continually experienced frustration and defeat at their hands. Jesus has ordained and placed leaders and ministers in the church for the purpose of working together for the perfecting of the saints, the work of the ministry, and the edifying of the whole body of Christ UNTIL we all come in the unity of the faith. (Ephesians 4:12,13)

Mark this statement: Unity within the body of Christ is the move of the Holy Spirit as we race down the homestretch of time, heading toward the perfection and completion of the body of Christ. Ministers and leaders that are not in step with unity are out of sync with the flow of the Holy Spirit. The Lord will require accountability on this matter when overseers stand before Him at the Judgment Seat of Christ.

We will see from the verses of scripture instructing us HOW to engage these spirit beings that unity and only unity will insure us success in controlling the heavens and building the kingdom of God on the earth. We are at war and we must forsake all selfish agendas for the sake of loyalty for the King and His Kingdom.

Engaging the Enemy

Since principalities and powers are heavenly beings, we must engage them in that sphere and not on the physical plane. Wrestling against flesh and blood is futile. We need to learn how to grapple with our antagonists and fight as those who do not “beat the air.”

Now that we have seen that these spirit beings are on the same plane, and in the same rank and file as angels, we learn to war against them - by enlisting the angels into this spiritual battle. This is a battle of the air force for heavenly supremacy. Since the invention of weapons, warfare strategy has shown that controlling the air, whether through catapults, spears, or bows and arrows, is the first volley in any campaign. It has only been recently, within the past 25 years or so, that the Christian church has effectively warred in the heavenlies. This applies equally to battling principalities over your country, state or city or engaging powers over your church, school or home. We need to learn how to enlist the angels, the mighty archangels and ministering spirits given to the cause.

A clarion truth to grasp in the army of the Lord is that angels excel in strength, but we excel in authority.

Bless the LORD, you His angels, who excel in strength, who do His word, heeding the voice of His word. Psalm 103:20

Angels do the Word of the Lord, but that word must be voiced by mankind when it comes to exercising dominion over the earth. God gave mankind authority over this realm and He likewise gave angels as ministering spirits for us to command into this battle. Angels heed the Word of the Lord, but that word must be voiced by the recognized authority that God placed within the army of the Lord. In the army of the Lord, angels excel in strength, but mankind excels in authority.

Angels camp around those that fear the Lord (Psalms 34:7) and are the mighty ones that war against principalities and powers. We engage them to war in the heavenlies by utilizing the keys to the kingdom.

“And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.” Matthew 16:19

By utilizing these keys, we who are on earth bind the elements in heaven; and we who are on earth loose the elements in the heavens. The elements are archangels and ministering spirits versus principalities and powers. The keys to the kingdom are essential for controlling the heavens in order to build the Kingdom of God on earth.

The Keys to the Kingdom

Most Bible dictionaries will tell you that “keys” are synonymous with authority. ⁶These keys therefore have been placed within our authority to use. Understanding these keys will “unlock” our exercised authority over principalities and powers.

Jesus said that war was going to happen and that the gates of hell would try to prevail against the church. He also gave us these keys to prevent this from happening.

“And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it” Matthew 16:18

The next verse tells us much about the keys. For centuries the church thought that Peter held the keys because they did not watch the pronoun to whom Jesus referred. When He said, “I will give unto you “ (NKJV), or “thee” (KJV), it is a singular pronoun. This pronoun refers to its closest antecedent which is “church,” not Peter. The keys to the kingdom are given to the church.

It is very important that you grasp this point - the word church is singular and the pronoun is singular also. (A pronoun must agree with its antecedent in number, either singular or plural.) This is the revelation of unity - the whole church as ONE single element, with one mind and one mouth, holds the keys to the kingdom. This authority is not held by just one person nor can it be operated most effectively by just one mouth. Here is our key to enjoining the holy angels into battle - we must strive together in unity, in our prayers and in our proclamations, for the supremacy of the heavens. When we do, we loose angels to bind principalities. We send ministering spirits into the heavenlies to war for the Kingdom of God.

Matthew 16:9 validates the operation of this key by the whole universal church, not just a single congregation. Jesus said the key was given to “MY CHURCH.” This verse tells the whole, single, unified church of an area to engage a principality, since principalities operate over larger geographical areas. The next usage of “binding and loosing” will reveal how to war against a spiritual power over a local congregation.

Matthew 18:17 contains the other usage of the word “church,” This verse is not talking about the whole universal church, but a local congregation. It is dealing with how to handle offences in a local congregation (which incidentally is how to keep demons out of the local church), and issues local congregations authority to utilize “binding and loosing.” Again however, this powerful tool is given to a single unit, not to an individual. It is given to the local church, to YOU, the single church. Verse 20 gives us the actual definition of a local church.

“For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them.” Matthew 18:20

Jesus is only recorded using the word “church” twice in His earthly ministry. BOTH times in the very next verse He directly issues the authority of binding and loosing to the church. That indicates that this vital tool of spiritual warfare is not a separate gun hanging from the belt of each believer, but is a cannon mounted on the roof of the church. It does not shoot individual demons, but principalities and powers. It is aimed at the heavens and it requires unity among the members to effectively discharge it.

Since we have determined that spiritual powers are assigned to local churches, we can assert that this tool of warfare is given to local churches to battle the assigned authority over them.

“Assuredly, I say to you (the local congregation), whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.” Matthew 18:18

Where two or three members of a local church agree on what is to be done on earth, in their church, it is done in heaven. We again see that “binding and loosing” is not a single weapon of warfare given to an individual, but is the collective weapon of warfare used to battle spiritual powers that rule in the heavenlies.

It is difficult to recount just how many churches I have seen gather in unity to engage a spiritual power and the amazing effect it has had. Whenever the church comes together to pray with one mind and one mouth - not for Aunt Lucy’s sick cat or Grandma’s lumbago - but to war in the spirit realm, they collectively summons angels and warring ministering spirits to enter the campaign. Results are quick and powerful because they are engaging a disarmed foe (Colossians 2:15).

Likewise, when local churches unite, principalities are quickly displaced and situations improve in cities, states and countries. Satan and his principalities and powers spare no expense in keeping the church divided because they know the certain doom prepared for them if the church ever unites on its knees.

Individuals within a local church must unite to operate their “cannon” as members of a local congregation. Groups from all over an area, from different local congregations, must unite to operate the cannon on the roof of that “city-wide” church. The cannon on the roof of the local church fires at the assigned spiritual power, while the cannon on the roof of the city-wide church aims at the ruling principality.

(Incidentally, the collective prayers of both a husband and wife will displace spiritual authorities from over a home. The collective prayers of the leadership of the church will bind a power from harassing a minister. The combined prayers of teachers, students and parents will displace a spiritual power from over a school.)

Firing all of these cannons simultaneously is the key to dividing principalities and powers.

Displacing Principalities and Powers

Demons are cast out of bodies, but principalities and powers are displaced out of jurisdictional authority. The collective effort and faith of a local church displaces a spiritual power from over a local church, and the collective prayers of local churches praying together displace principalities.

Once these heavenly beings have been displaced, then the occupying forces of a city must go to work. The ministering spirits and warring angels will control the heavens while the church is patrolling the streets.

There has been some reasonable criticism over contemporary spiritual warfare strategies. Certain well-intended but misinformed zealots think that once a principality or power has been bound then the war is over. This is the same error the Ottoman Empire made during the sixteenth century by just shelling the island of Malta which the Knights of Saint John occupied, and the United States made when they only bombed Iraq in the Desert Storm campaign. You cannot win a war with air force domination alone. The army must also win the ground war to successfully conquer and dominate the enemy.

Engaging spiritual powers and principalities is only the first step in building the Kingdom of God. After control of the heavens has been secured, the church needs to patrol the streets. We must “possess the land” by wielding the sword of the spirit that comes out of our mouths. We must witness the love of God and the resurrection of Jesus. We must win the lost, baptize the saved, cast out demons and teach the Word of God for the salvation of the soul. These objectives are much more readily accomplished when the keys of the Kingdom have been operated and the heavens over a location are peaceful.

The ground campaign must continue and vigilance must be maintained to prevent principalities and powers from re-emerging into dominance. Since they are not cast out, but displaced, their influence always poses a threat.

Divide and Conqueror

In our quest to understand principalities and powers, we have focused upon defining and analysing them. Now we know the differences: one works as an overseer to the other; principalities rule over larger geographical and political areas, and powers influence smaller units of authority (i.e., families, schools and churches). We can at least direct our efforts to divide their collective strength and defeat each of them. The way to divide them is simple: we stay in unity and battle both, both principality and power, at the same time. We divide their strength and focus.

To learn how to do this we will glean from the lesson of Old Testament warfare and then apply this insight to New Testament spiritual understanding. We will study physical warfare from the book of Joshua and then apply it to the age. The book of Joshua is a gold mine of spiritual warfare strategy. It contains the plan for defeating principalities and powers, and the order in which to do it.

The Lord promised the children of Israel they would possess the Promised Land. The way they accomplished this is the same way we successfully battle principalities and powers. There were seven nations that Israel needed to conquer in order to possess the land. These represent the principalities they faced.

When the LORD your God brings you into the land which you go to possess, and has cast out many nations before you, the Hittites and the Girgashites and the Amorites and the Canaanites and the Perizzites and the Hivites and the Jebusites, seven nations greater and mightier than you, Deuteronomy 7:1.

Within each major region, there were towns and cities to take. Those represent the spiritual powers.

And he took it (Debir, a city of Canaan), and the king (representative of the spiritual power) thereof, and all the cities thereof (in Canaan); and they smote them with the edge of the sword, and utterly destroyed all the souls that were therein; he left none remaining; as he had done to Hebron, so he did to Debir, and to the king (spiritual power) thereof; as he had done also to Libnah, and to her king (spiritual power). Joshua 10:39

Furthermore, when Joshua and Israel conquered the land, they accomplished their task by attacking the principalities one at a time. We make our big mistake when we get divided and begin attacking all the principalities at the same time. This divides and weakens the force of our army by attacking on too many fronts. What we need to do is attack a single point together and gain momentum, like Joshua did at Jericho. Then move on to the next point of attack, like Israel did at Ai.

Many times we divide our efforts and our forces against different fronts. For example, if a principality of lust is functioning in a city, the city-wide church needs to focus upon it and not be distracted by another principality of murder. That one can be handled at another time - each in its proper order, as directed by the Holy Spirit.

In the Old Testament account the order of the attack was directed by Joshua. God's anointed leader. Joshua held the authority with regard to Israel that Jesus now holds as head of the church. By means of the Holy Spirit, Jesus is rallying his forces to take the land for the Kingdom of God.

Today city-wide churches are to be led by the Holy Spirit. When one principality falls, it will spread panic and confusion throughout the rest of them, while momentum is gained by the church. Predictably, the remaining principalities may repeat what happened in the conquest of the Promised Land - they will join together to attack the church. This is playing right into God's hands.

And it came to pass, when all the kings which were on this side Jordan, in the hills, and in the valleys, and in all the coasts of the great sea over against Lebanon, the Hittite, and the Amorite, the Canaanite, the Perizzite, the Hivite, and the Jebusite, heard thereof; That they gathered themselves together, to fight with Joshua and with Israel, with one accord. Joshua 9:1,2

The account in Joshua 10 describes how God rained down great hailstones to defeat this collective force. This is verifiable military strategy. Once a momentum is gained by defeating a major principality, those remaining will unite to attack you. Do not panic! As the city-wide church stays united, God will secure the victory for you. Remember, this is His idea to use the church to demonstrate His wisdom.

He wants to do it. You do not have to beg Him. Just get in the right place for Him to accomplish His good pleasure.

The Satanic kingdom gets divided when we single out a particular principality and hammer on it until it falls. Confusion and panic will spread, and if the city-wide church will stay united and led by the Holy Spirit, they can literally run the devil out of town.

The children of Israel also collectively focused their strength on individual targets rather than trying to take on a whole region at once. They did this by destroying each city within a region, thereby showing our need to focus on taking down the spiritual powers over each church. Today this applies to focusing on specific spiritual powers within a particular area of a city. It could also involve going to battle for a particular church, or a group of churches in an area. Even though each church has the authority to bind and loose over its own territory, when local congregations in local geographic areas work together, they will see the spiritual powers fall.

Remember the power to bind and loose sends the angels of God into the battle. The city-wide church has the biggest cannon on its roof, but each local congregation has one on its roof, too. When all of these are aimed in the same direction, the heavens explode.

The heart of the enemy will melt in the spirit realm just as it did in the natural realm when the Lord is fighting for the church.

So it was, when all the kings of the Amorites who were on the west side of the Jordan, and all the kings of the Canaanites who were by the sea, heard that the LORD had dried up the waters of the Jordan from before the children of Israel until we had crossed over, that their heart melted: and there was no spirit in them any longer because of the children of Israel. Joshua 5:1

The great key in dividing principalities and powers is to focus our strength on the particular issues the Holy Spirit identifies. We bind principalities by loosing angels through country-wide church. We bind spiritual powers by loosing angels through united prayers from our local congregations. Accomplishing these simultaneously helps to maintain unity and weakens the enemy on all fronts.

Joshua, the Old Testament type of Jesus, directed the whole nation of Israel. This illustrates the need for unity as we are led by the Holy Spirit. The first target was Jericho. This indicates that we should be after the biggest and worst enemy first. After defeating it, momentum will grow. We may need to attack Ai next. As we stay holy and united, eventually panic will spread in the evil kingdom. Inevitably, a showdown will come as the other principalities and powers unite. When this happens, remember the smile on God's lips as He shows Himself strong through us. When they collect to fight against us, remember that "if God be for us, who can be against us?"

Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. Romans 8:37-39

CONCLUSION

Jesus disarmed principalities and powers through the cross. They are enemies, but they have no armour. When we collectively pray (either in a city-wide, state-wide or nationwide campaign) they will be defeated.

Displacing a principality is a decisive spiritual victory. Displacing spiritual powers weakens the hold and strength of the principality.

A kingdom divided against itself cannot stand. We need to stand united, putting off petty differences for the sake of battling a common foe. As we do so, we will separate principalities and powers and cause division throughout the evil kingdom.

It was God's guarded secret that He would use us to embarrass principalities and powers. Jesus gave us authority over them and over all power of the enemy. As these evil spirits are displaced, the Kingdom of God can be constructed. Our agreement in prayer will bind the enemy and loose angels into the battle.

The aim of spiritual warfare is not merely to defeat the enemy but to let the oppressed go free. When principalities and powers are displaced, our job of liberating the captives has just begun. The Great Commission illustrates the balance of authority and deliverance. In Matthew 28:18-20 Jesus said, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you always, even to the end of the age."

Let us control the heavens by separating and displacing principalities and powers through binding and loosing in unity. Let us patrol the streets, thereby fulfilling the Great Commission - winning the lost and making disciples of all nations. May the manifold wisdom of Almighty God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, be displayed by His church for all to see. Amen.

NOTES

1. "Man" is the Hebrew word adam, which means "red earth." Man is actually a spirit being placed in an earthen vessel. God made a spirit being and put him in a physical vessel so that mankind could co-inhabit both the spiritual and physical realms. Mankind was to have dominion over the physical realm and to subdue the spiritual realm.
2. The Word of God written in the stars was common knowledge to the Hebrews. Psalms 19:1-6 gives the details. The coming of Jesus Christ was foretold in the heavens and many celestial events are continually being unfolded now. For more information, see E.W Bullinger's Witness of the Stars. Pp 54-58.
3. Dale M. Sides, "Principalities, Powers and Demons, Their Differences, Origins and Our Authority Over Them." Episkopos, October 1999. This study discusses the relationships among the spirits in detail. Demons are terrestrial, whereas principalities and powers are heavenly.
4. Nebuchadnezzar's vision involved a statue having a head of gold (Babylon); a chest of silver (Persia); loins of brass (Greece); and legs and iron and clay (Rome). The legs carried this domination over the world. It began with Babylon and concludes with Rome.
5. "By the abundance of your trading (merchandizing) you became filled with violence within, and you sinned; therefore I cast you as a profane thing out of the mountain of God; and I destroyed you, Oh covering cherub, from the midst of the fiery stones." Ezekiel 28:16
6. "Keys are used synonymously with the concept of authority in biblical language. The Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible. Volume 3, p 786.



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