

Spiritual Warfare

(Sermon Notes) By: Warren Zehrung 8/12/2107

Time is growing short and God's people are being bombarded by Satan. How much longer will we enjoy the freedom of religion to have Sabbath services and a website with all our sermons and doctrine on line? Satan is encroaching on our religious freedoms. All around the world, everything of a Godly nature and our religious freedoms are being cracked down on.

YouTube announced that it is now **targeting** videos that contain **controversial** materials that expose subversive religious (Muslim) movements, or hold up as supremacist, those who have content showing God has a chosen people - (Israel).

China's Ministry of Public Security is tackling **the problem** of smaller websites that are disseminating "harmful" information."

You cannot read certain sections of the Bible in **England** in Sabbath services without the threat of going to jail.

Google employees have been instructed to "Demote Anything Non-Politically Correct from Search Results' ...like exclude anything that is **anti-Islamic terror**, or 'critical of Islam,' from search results.

A **Facebook** page was frozen for two weeks, and the owner was advised that they could face arrest for 'hate crimes' if any further content of that nature is posted in the future.

I hope that everyone has a good "hard copy" supply of sermons and doctrine, because the day is coming when we will be shut down.

John 9:4 The night cometh, when no man can work.

Satan is encroaching on our religious freedoms.

Children in parts of **Canada** can now make life-altering decisions before the age of consent against their parents' better wisdom. Young people today do not stand a chance of having a right biblical understanding of God.

And in Canada, if you will not call a little boy, "Miss" because he decided that he wants to be a girl – you can be fined and imprisoned.

Canadian law has an even wider reach. The Canadian law's chief advocate thinks that it is "child abuse" to deny a child's chosen gender identity.

And it's not just Canada that's lost its collective mind on this issue.

The same law is already in place in Illinois – here in the U.S.

How far is our society away from concluding that all parents are unfit if they don't play along with their kids' misguided gender identification?

You know how the states are cracking down on those who will not cater to the perverted population.

You must bake the cakes for their wedding and issue their marriage license – or it is **you** who will go to jail.

The nations of Israel are basically the only nations in the world that allow same-sex marriages.

As in the days of Noah violence and crime are almost out of control!

It's high time that the Church of God wakes up – wide awake! This is no time to be letting our **guard** down.

We know Satan is subtle – look at how he handled Adam and Eve, after they had **personally** been instructed by Jesus Christ.

Now is not the time to stop watching as so many of our brethren have discontinued their watchful vigilance. Satan is putting his hand into world events **even now**.

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

Revelation 12 comes to a close with Satan **knowing** that his time is short.

Revelation 13:2 ...The dragon [Satan] gave him [the Beast] his power, and his seat, and great authority.

The Beast Power is on the horizon – maybe closer! Are we alert to how serious world conditions are? Look at how much the world has changed recently. Satan is being unleashed even now.

God will soon remove the **restraints** on Satan which, for now, allow us to **live normal lives** and preach the Gospel to the world.

2Thessalonians 2:7 For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way.

“Lets will let,” means that very soon now Satan and his Beast partner-in-crime will be **unleashed** on this world – and given a free rein to work his iniquity.

2Thessalonians 2:8 And then shall that Wicked [Beast] be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming:

2Thessalonians 2:9 Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with **all power** and signs and lying wonders,

The Beast is going to be cruel and vicious to those who have acted on God's Truth:

2Thessalonians 2:10 And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.

Have you noticed how down through history – nothing **ever survives** long – except for God's spiritual Plan which stays on track?

It is the apostle Peter who describes this world in which we live as a **house of cards** ready to topple! Big, really **big powers** are at work. Russia, China, the Asian trading block... There is an unseen war going on behind closed doors.

Moscow, and **Shanghai** are busily working at creating a New World Order of big banks and big government by focusing heavily on economic, political and military issues in their regions and beyond.

You know that Russia has gold, and oil, and is aggressive.

China is huge, and has a considerable military, and an assertive space program that is not for peaceful purposes.

They have their own GPS – Global Positioning system that will kick in when ours is rendered inoperative. These and many more facts provide a compelling indication **of the direction** the world is headed.

Sure, the United States is trying to maintain its own sphere of influence to **counter** Russia and Asia.

We are trying to contain those Eastern powers with NATO, the European Union, the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, the World Trade Organization, and with Washington DC being the ace in the hole – but because of our sins, it will be too little too late.

We are losing the spiritual battle against Satan. It will all come crashing down on our heads before you know it.

The Stock Market is better than ever – but that's like looking at the speedometer and saying, "we're going faster and faster," without realizing that the bridge is out ahead. Our economy is really sick and getting worse.

For a while, our government will try to maintain its size and control with ever increasing taxes and spending – but those measures will only speed up the downward spiral – and make the final crash all the more catastrophic.

In God's Church we know that the only **light at the end of the tunnel** will be the return of Jesus Christ.

It is Jesus who prophesied just how bad things would become before His return.

2Peter 3:3-4 In the last days scoffers will be walking after their own lusts, saying...[This is what many in the Church of God are saying]: "Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation."

Brethren, let's be wise and understand that all things definitely **are not** continuing as they have from the beginning of creation – but are about to reach a resounding crescendo that will soon usher in the return of Jesus Christ.

America and all of Israel have rejected God.

We are not going to turn there, but Isaiah 10 shows that God will use a modern **Assyrian king, German leader** or emperor as a tool of His indignation on the USA and Israelitish nations (vs. 5).

That modern **Beast power** will also have to contend with another situation as well.

It is described this way by Daniel: And watch for the word "push." "Push" is the operative word here:

Daniel 11:40 At the time of the end [of this age today] shall the king of the south [possibly a radical Islamic jihadist movement] **push** at him [the final end-time "Beast" ruler of Europe – the one who gives his power to ten kings or sovereigns]: and the king of the north shall come against him [king of the south] like a whirlwind, with chariots, and with horsemen, and with many ships; and he [king of the north] shall enter into the countries [Islamic countries], and shall overflow and pass over." (Daniel 11:40, Revelation 17:12-17)

What kind of "push" is the world of radical Islam already bringing to bear on Europe, specifically, and on much of the rest of the world, as well?

The answer in short is: The "Push" is their migrating multitudes, their sharia law, their religion and their culture, which in the long run has no use for others not of their religion.

We have been witnessing immigration and culture shock of **epic proportions** descending uncontrollably on the lands formerly occupied by the Holy Roman Empire. This Muslim demographic encroachment is a "push" – a population **pressure** on Europe!

Do we realize what is building up here? Historically, it is well known that the Germanic race considers themselves to be a **notch above** the rest of men, with an ingrained desire to **spread out** into the (lebensraum) "living space" of other nations. That's what WWII was all about.

This ongoing conflict between Muslim incursion and insurgency, and German ingrained territorial aggression are like two colliding tectonic plates.

It is going to result in the clash of two titans, and the result will be **Islam vanquished** in Europe, and Jerusalem surrounded by those in control of Europe.

Every house of cards collapses. If it is not in accordance with the way of God – it will topple over. It is sin that causes every house of cards to collapse.

First it was Satan's rebellion against God...

2Peter 2:4 For if God spared not the angels [our first example] that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment;

Adam and Eve built a house of cards in Eden that toppled.

Then Cain built a Godless society that toppled over:

2Peter 2:5 And spared not the old world [their house of cards crumpled], but saved Noah the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly;

The millions, perhaps billions of men and women of Noah's day had their house of cards come falling down.

And then, Peter gives us another Biblical example of those who had their house of cards fall because of iniquity and sin.

2Peter 2:6 And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes condemned them with an overthrow, making them an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly; Sodom and Gomorrah's house of cards disintegrated!

When we come out and separate ourselves from iniquity – we will be saved – as we saw with Noah and now Lot – Abraham's nephew.

2Peter 2:7 And delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked:

2Peter 2:8 (For that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds;)

Here's our hope brethren:

2Peter 2:9 The Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished:

All the **mighty empires** before us have fallen. We know that Assyria, Babylon, Persia, Greece and Rome have all fallen. It can and does happen to great and powerful nations. The sun has already set on the **British Empire**. Do we arrogantly believe that our fate will be any different than all the rest?

Yes, America still has the largest economy in the world. But America is physically and spiritually a sick nation.

We are in serious financial trouble with a debt that is not only unwieldy, but will never be resolved because we have a government that is unwilling and inept in passing any legislation that will render us solvent some day.

It is not just America that is in very serious trouble; nearly every major world economy is in the same boat.

That is serious business because that is when sabers go to rattling, and hostilities break out. There are military hawks on all sides who are saying that there's nothing like a timely war to get an economy moving.

The Beast of prophecy **might be** starting to be formed, even as we look on.

Satan is aligning great powers against one another in more ways than we can see.

Satan has always wanted to be worshipped. He works hand in hand with the Beast power to obtain that worship.

Revelation 13:4 And [all the world **admired** and] **worshipped** the dragon [Satan] which gave power unto the Beast: and they worshipped the Beast, saying, Who is like unto the Beast? who is able to make war with him?

Revelation 13:7 And it was given unto [the Beast] to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations.

Revelation 13:8 And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship [the Beast], whose names are **not** written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.

Brethren, Are we listening? God says:

Revelation 13:9 If any man have an ear, let him hear.

Jacob's Trouble is almost here: The immediate future is fearfully bleak for our Israelitish nations.

Nature abhors a vacuum and there are many nations ready to assume America's dominant role when our house of cards comes tumbling down.

The United States Dollar is still the world's number one currency, but China, Russia and others would like to see that \$ supremacy come to an end.

1Thesalonians 5:2-3 You yourselves know perfectly that the Day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then **sudden destruction comes** upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape.

We see the terrible havoc that is about to be brought on the entire world by Satan, but let's realize that more than this, Satan desires the destruction and devastation of God's people.

How do we survive in so great a spiritual warfare? God explains to us how we are to wage spiritual warfare in a world devoid of God.

1Peter 5:8 Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walks about, seeking whom he may devour.

Brethren, can you read the handwriting on the wall?

The people of America worship **idols** symbolized by Hollywood, TV, politics, steeples, churches, stained glass, organ music, Movies, children's video games, and marching banners.

They all have their symbols to signify their brand of paganism – colored ribbons, plaques, and insignias – anything except the Scriptures.

Being against these things is not righteousness...

Being **near God** is righteousness...

Have you noticed that there is a concerted effort to relegate the spirit world to every conceivable witch, phantom, gargoyle, sorceress, evil spirit, supernatural alien, bizarre life-form, ghost, walking dead, vampire, or zombie. It is a nasty world – and only getting worse.

Brethren, you know where the fascination comes from. Satan himself!

There is a universal fixation associated with the dark demonic underworld. Even Joe Jr. attempted to change the very nature of the incorruptible God into... "creepy" things – as Paul put it.

Romans 1:23 And changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things.

We have fought a long battle with Satan - but too many are letting down and gradually reabsorbing the attitudes and culture of the surrounding world.

1Peter 5:8 Be sober, be **vigilant**; because your **adversary** the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour:

1Peter 5:9 Whom **resist** stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world.

"Be **vigilant**," charges us to be fully awake, to set ourselves in a state of watchfulness and readiness.

Adversary, he is against God's people - seeking whom he may devour.

Thirdly "**resist** him," is a command to stand firm.

Here is the answer to our being successful in our **spiritual warfare** against Satan.

James 4:7 **Submit yourselves therefore to God**. Resist the devil, and he will **flee** from you.

James 4:8 **Draw nigh to God**, and He will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded.

We have the God-backed promise that Satan will flee!

The charge is to resist Satan, but it is directly linked with submission to God.

Submission is the voluntarily act of placing oneself under the authority of God to show respect and obedience.

If we submit to God, Satan will flee.

The hard part is helping the brethren see how a Christian should battle Satan, and walk with Christ at the same time.

It is not enough to be against all the paganism and wrongdoing in the world. We must put on the righteousness of Jesus Christ.

We live in a pagan oriented world - full of false beliefs, **symbols** and religions.

Paul suggests that we would have to **leave the planet** to avoid them all (1Corinthians 5:10).

Like the pagans, we eat food, dress ourselves, have a roof over our heads, and use the highways as pagans do, but that does not make us a party to their sins.

We touch not the unclean things in order to set ourselves apart from pagans.

Here's the question we must answer for ourselves:

When are we in danger of crossing the line, and **taking away from God** - the things that are God's (Matthew 22:21).

It is not wrong in itself to go where the pagans have trod.

Paul taught at Mars' Hill [a hot bed for paganism] - but it was for God's greater honor and glory (Acts 17:22).

When my dad died, I went into a Catholic Church for the first time in about 40 years - but I did not bow my knee to Baal (nor my mind or heart for that matter.) (Romans 11:4, Romans 14:11).

Our priority must be to always Give God the Glory.

Philippians 2:10 That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth;

There are some grass-root moral people in the USA and England - there always will be some - from which God will draw a remnant to populate the millennial world tomorrow.

But, moral relativism has taken over the Western world. No longer do the ethical intentions of its inhabitant's thinking reflect a Judeo-Christian morality of objective and universal moral truths. Instead they follow that which is **politically correct** relative to social trends, **deviant** cultural movements, and godless personal inclinations. The whole worldly system is anti-God.

Paul notes in Romans 12:2, "Do not be conformed to this world."

The Greek more correctly reads, "Stop allowing yourself to be fashioned to the pattern of this age," or as the J.B. Phillips translation puts it, "Don't let the world around you squeeze you into its own mold."

The god of this world, is its driving force (2Corinthians 4:4)

"Evil company corrupts good habits" (1Corinthians 15:33).

Friendship with the world corrupts us.

Ephesians 6 makes especially clear that we are involved in a war.

Ephesians 6:10 Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.

Ephesians 6:11 Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

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

Ephesians 6:13 Wherefore take unto you the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

Ephesians 6:14 Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; [Christ's]

Ephesians 6:15 And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace;

Ephesians 6:16 Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.

Ephesians 6:17 And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God:

The Bible makes it clear that God has willed that this spiritual warfare is an absolute necessity for the development and preparation of His children to live in His Kingdom.

It cannot be avoided; we cannot remain neutral. In one sense, we really have no choice. We must either fight or be lost.

Substitute enemies, Masons, Secret Societies, eastern religions, ... Islam's spirits of darkness, black magic, don't dabble Ouija boards, games with demon motifs.

2Peter 2:19 While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption: for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage.

Romans 6:16 Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?

Romans 6:17 But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you.

Romans 6:18 Being then made free from sin, ye became the **servants of righteousness**.

Romans 6:19 I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as ye have **yielded your members servants to uncleanness** and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so **now** yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness.

What should a Christian do? The answer is short and simple: Be right with God.

Job – hedge about us –

We need to remember, though, that God has put a wall of protection around us, so Satan and his demons can go only so far in their attempts to corrupt us and destroy our loyalty to God and His truth (Job 1:6-10).

Jesus, who has already defeated Satan, is on His throne overseeing our well-being.

His protection is not something we flaunt, but is power we can rely on.

Matthew 4:4 Jesus Christ in mortal combat.

Luke 4:4 **fasting** to ward off Satan and to break addiction.

Commandment keeping **to draw near** to God.

2Corinthians 10:3 For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh:

2Corinthians 10:4 (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God [spiritual])

...to the pulling down of [a mighty fortress] strong holds.

2Corinthians 10:5 Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.

That is when we become pure in heart – able to see God.

Because we are in the flesh, the mighty fortress of which Paul speaks is not a fortified fortress on a hilltop that must be conquered with the armaments of war – but the mighty fortress we battle against is in our heart.

Jesus Christ said that as we near the very end-time, religious persecution, family betrayal, spiritual deception, tribulation and falling away from the love of God would be the norm, rather than the exception.

Years ago, when we were first called, did any of us expect that we would get to the year 2017 before Christ returned?

Why has this age gone on for so much longer than we expected? Why have we had to see the Church dwindle to a small flock? There must be a reason.

It seems that it was not so difficult to live our faith when we were first called and first believed.

True, most of us had to deal with work issues, relatives and friends who thought we were foolish for joining an organization that met on Saturday and rejected their holidays.

But after that, we were surrounded by like-minded brethren and we could see the tangible results of The Work.

We did not know it back then, but God knew there were many among us who had not put Him and His Way first.

Many people who attended with us were coasting or were never really with the program.

Jesus told His disciples that there would be an end-time sorting out.

"Let both the wheat and the tares grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn." (Matthew 13:30)

That time of testing is now.

Jesus Christ needs to test each of us, individually, to see where we stand. We still have more spiritual battles to fight.

Like many early Christians who died for their faith, are you willing in these last days to face poverty, persecution, prison and even martyrdom for the sake of His Word? (John 16:2-3)

Are we willing to suffer affliction, or do we always have to have it good?

Paul spoke of those faithful Christians who were, Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season." (Hebrews 11:25)

...We glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation works patience." (Romans 5:3)

As we study through the epistles, we see this theme of trials and afflictions played out over and over in the lives of the early Church brethren.

Let's admit that our pains and sufferings of today pale into insignificance when we compare them to the afflictions that the early Church endured – we have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin as they did (Hebrews 12:4).

God needs to have hard evidence from each of us as to our faithfulness or lack thereof.

We are either faithful to Him, or faithful to this present evil world.

During this difficult time for the brethren, each of us is writing our own record that God will use when the Tribulation starts.

We all hope that we will be accounted worthy to escape the Tribulation – but the scriptures show that many of the brethren will not be practicing their Christianity as Christ requires.

"The dragon [Satan] was wroth with the woman [Church of God], and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ." (Revelation 12:17)

Those brethren who will have to endure the Tribulation will eventually see that they had not followed Christ's example in laying down their lives for the brethren.

They allowed themselves to drift away from God's truth.

By their own actions and decisions, it will be clear to them that they, themselves, were at fault – they had not been watchful to fulfill their Christian duty.

God will not make an arbitrary decision to send anyone into the Tribulation – they will bring that test and trial upon themselves. Brethren, never assume that our trials and tests are behind us.

In many ways, our situation today is quite similar to the latter days of the first century Ephesian era.

Many of those members left their first love and fell away thinking that Christ had "delayed His coming."

The excitement of their calling had worn off. They, too, accepted watered-down doctrine, sought high position in the Church and mistreated their fellow servants. The group of brethren they had been called into declined to almost nothing after it had been a functioning body that performed many baptisms, met in large groups, and saw great miracles.

Certain members went over to "strange doctrines" that were gaining in popularity.

The majority wanted to be "where the action was", and so they gravitated away from the practice of true Christianity.

God had told the Church to watch and hold fast. Our warfare is spiritual in nature - and victory comes from God alone.

End: Spiritual Warfare