



# The Harvester

*Preparing Souls  
To Serve The Lord!*

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## Human Nature and Spiritual Warfare

Brian R. Kenyon

Recently, while studying Psalms 91, a beautiful song about God's love, victory, and protection of His people, I was intrigued by verses 11-12, which read, "For He shall give His angels charge over you, To keep you in all your ways. In their hands they shall bear you up, Lest you dash your foot against a stone." These verses should sound familiar. They are the verses the devil used in his second temptation of Jesus (Mt. 4:6), proving that even the devil can quote Scripture (but just because someone quotes Scripture does not make him or her correct). However, the part that is of interest for this article is the declaration that God used angels to "keep" and to "bear ... up" His faithful people. How did God do this? Does He still do this? If so, in what way (if any) is this manifested?

### The Nature of Mankind

Mankind is a very unique part of God's vast and wonderful creation. Mankind is the ONLY creature God said prior to being created, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness," and then afterward, "So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them" (Gen. 1:26-27 cf. Gen. 5:1; 9:6; Jas. 3:9). Mankind is also the only part of God's creation of whom it was said, "let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth" (Gen. 1:26 cf. Gen. 9:2; Ps. 8:6). The full extent of what exactly being made in the "image" and "likeness" of God entails, we may never know, but one truth we know is that

humans are comprised of "spirit, soul, and body" (1 Thes. 5:23), or to put it in simpler terms, the "outward man [and] ... the inward man" (2 Cor. 4:16 cf. Rom. 7:22; Eph. 3:16).

Mankind has both a physical and a spiritual nature that is unique among God's creation. To compare the physical and spiritual realms and mankind's relation to each, imagine a horizontal line drawn across a screen. Everything above that line is spiritual. God would be in that section, along with demons, angels, and all spirit beings. Everything below that line is physical. Included here would be animals, plants, rocks, and dirt. If we were to represent mankind on this diagram, we would draw a small circle, half of which were above the line (spiritual) and half of which below the line (physical). Mankind uniquely has both a physical aspect and a spiritual aspect combined into one nature (Lk. 10:27; 1 Thes. 5:23), with the ability, in a limited way, to control, harness, and utilize physical nature to humanity's own advantage (Gen. 1:26).

### The Nature of Christian Warfare

Although the nature of our warfare involves physical elements (cf. 2 Cor. 1:8; 11:23-27), it is ultimately against spiritual forces, as Paul plainly declared, "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" (Eph. 6:10-13). The word "wrestle [struggle, NAS95]" (*pale*, πάλη) refers to a struggle; a contest between two in which each tries to throw the other, and

which is decided when the victor is able to hold his opponent down by the throat (Thayer, 474). While “principalities and powers” can be used in contexts of human authorities (Titus 3:1), they often, as here, indicate spiritual (or at least perceived spiritual) authorities. “Principalities [rulers, ESV]” is translated from the same word (*arche*, ἀρχή) as “beginning,” but can refer to a ruler, or authority (cf. Eph. 3:10). The word is used of angelic and demonic powers, because they were thought of as having political organization (Bauer, 112). They are part of the evil world of spirits ruled by the devil (1 Jn. 5:19). The word translated “powers [authorities, ESV]” (*exousia*, ἐξουσία) refers to power exercised by rulers or others in high places by virtue of their position. These are “spiritual potentates, the more powerful among spiritual created beings ... demons” (cf. Col. 2:15) (Thayer, 225). These spiritual forces are at work in the present time, but they have no power over Christians, unless Christians allow them (Rom. 8:38 cf. Jas. 4:7). Christ will forever destroy them when He returns (1 Cor. 15:24). “Rulers of ... this age [world, KJV]” (*kosmokrator*, κοσμοκράτωρ), or, literally, world rulers, “came to be used of spiritual beings who (allegedly) had parts of the cosmos under their control ... of evil spirits” (Bauer, 445). These are rulers of this sinful world (cf. 1 Jn. 2:15-17), over whose realm Satan is in charge (cf. 1 Jn. 5:19). “Spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly [high, KJV] places” are spiritual forces of evil in the heavens. These pertain

to “evil spirits; the spirit forces of evil” (Bauer, 679). Thayer says, “belonging to a spirit, or being higher than man (in spiritualness), but inferior to God ... wicked spirits” (523). We must never underestimate the powerful forces that we are up against!

## The Spiritual Side of This Warfare

Often, the spiritual side of Christian warfare is a neglected study. This is partly because there is not as much information in the Bible about it compared to other subjects, although there is a good amount. Also, it is neglected because there are many weird, unscriptural views of spiritual warfare that turns-off people from the study, almost in the same way some do not want to study the Book of Revelation. However, there are some passages that offer good insight into the spirit realm and the war that rages there. As we consider the following passages, keep in mind the imaginary diagram we drew earlier with everything above the line being the spiritual realm and with mankind having both a spiritual and a physical aspect in one nature.

## Involvement of Angels

While God’s angels have been revealed in Scrip-

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ture as making appearances in the physical world in the form of men (Gen. 19:1-23 cf. Heb. 13:2), they are spiritual realm beings and serve God. There are too many angels mentioned in Scripture to count. One verse alone mentions “ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands [myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands, ESV]” of angels (Rev. 5:11)! The only way we know about the work of angels is what God has revealed in Scripture.

Only two angels are named in the Bible; namely, Gabriel and Michael. While Gabriel is depicted most often as delivering messages (Dan. 8:16-17; 9:21-27; Lk. 1:19-25, 26-38), Michael was usually involved in (spiritual) warfare (Dan. 10:20; 12:1; Jude 9; Rev. 12:7), although he delivered some messages (Dan. 10:13-19). Furthermore, unnamed angels were revealed to have been involved in other ways that helped God’s faithful people. For example, just in the Book of Revelation they are depicted as holding back judgment until God’s faithful could be sealed (Rev. 7:1-3); as killing a “third of mankind” (Rev. 9:15); and as pouring out the plagues of God upon the rebellious, persecuting system of Rome (Rev. 15:1, 6; 16:1; 21:9).

The devil also has angels that serve him (Rev. 12:7). In fact, hell was actually “prepared for the devil and his angels” (Mt. 25:41). Although these angels have been allowed by God to continue working with the devil to deceive (cf. Eph. 6:12), their fate has been sealed. When Jesus nailed to the cross, along with Himself, the “handwriting of requirements that was against us” (Col. 2:14), He also “disarmed principalities and powers ... [and] made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it” (Col. 2:15). In no uncertain terms, Paul declared the cross of Christ totally disarmed and defeated these spiritual forces of wickedness, in much the same way a Roman generals prisoners are publicly paraded through the streets of Rome in his triumphal parade! Furthermore, Jude indicated, “the angels who did not keep their proper domain, but left their own abode, He [God] has reserved in everlasting chains under darkness for the judgment of the great day” (Jude 6). Peter declared, “God did not spare the angels who sinned, but cast them down to hell and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved for judgment” (2 Pet. 2:4). One day, when Jesus returns, the devil and his angels will be cast into the “lake of fire” for eternal destruction (Rev. 20:10 cf. Mt. 25:41), but until then, the devil will continue to pursue us “like a roaring

lion, seeking whom he may devour” (1 Pet. 5:8).

## Christians Are Equipped

The Almighty God has not left His children defenseless. He has given Christians exactly what they need to be led in victory with Him. First, God has given us the proper weapons, as Paul stated:

Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. ... <sup>14</sup>Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, <sup>15</sup>and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; <sup>16</sup>above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. <sup>17</sup>And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; <sup>18</sup>praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints. (Eph. 6:11-18)

These weapons guarantee victory when properly applied, as Paul again wrote:

For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. <sup>4</sup>For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, <sup>5</sup>casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ. (2 Cor. 10:3-5)

Second, Christians are authenticated in the spirit world by the Holy Spirit. In three passages, Paul affirmed Christians are “sealed with the Holy Spirit” (Eph. 1:13; 4:30; 2 Cor. 1:22). The word translated “sealed” is from *sphragizo* (σφραγίζω), which means to seal, secure with a seal; mark with a seal; set apart by a seal; affirm to be true, acknowledge, prove (Jn. 3:33). It can refer to actual, physical sealing (Mt. 27:66; Rom. 15:28), or it can be used figuratively to “seal” in the sense of confirm or authenticate (Jn. 3:33; 6:27 cf. 1 Cor. 9:2). This “sealing” with the Holy Spirit takes place at the moment of a person’s obedience to the gospel in baptism (cf. 1 Cor. 6:11; 12:13 [cf. Acts 2:38]). The question is often asked, “For whom or in what realm does God seal Christians with the Holy Spirit?” At least part of the answer must include the spiritual world in order for the “principalities and powers” to know that Christians belong to Christ (cf. Rev. 5:1; 7:3-8). This is not known by empirical evidence (i.e., the physical senses) but by the revelation of God in Scripture! Because of God and His provisions, there is no reason for us to be defeated spiritually!

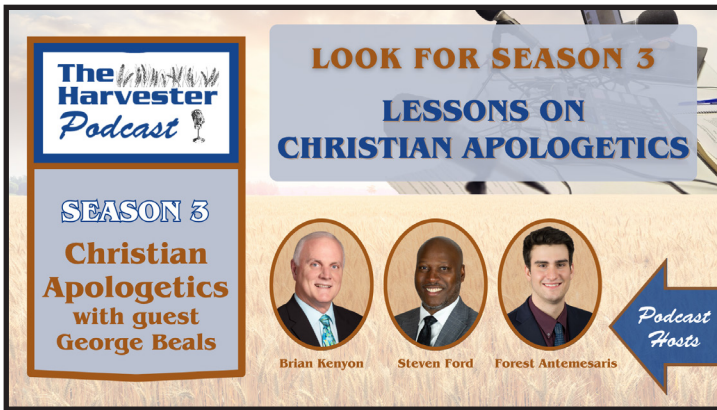


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## Fall Registration Opens July 15 at [www.fsop.net](http://www.fsop.net)

**Fall 2025 Semester Begins Aug. 4**

Registration opens July 15 online at [www.fsop.net](http://www.fsop.net). Any of these classes may be taken online for credit or to audit. Contact the office for more details.

Day	Time	Lakeland Classes	Instructor	Credit
Monday	___ 8:30-12:00	Revelation (259)	Bauer	3
	___ 1:00-4:15	Logic (270)	Beals	3
Tuesday	___ 8:30-12:00	Preacher and His Work (107)	Wheeler	3
	___ 8:30-12:00	English I: Grammar (124)	Kenyon	3
	___ 1:00-4:15	Life of Christ (117)	Wheeler	3
Wednesday	___ 8:30-12:00	Sermon Preparation and Delivery (203)	Ford	3
	___ 8:30-12:00	Greek I (222)	Kenyon	3
	___ 1:00-4:15	Holy Spirit (250)	Kenyon	3
Thursday	___ 8:30-12:00	Genesis (101)	Kemp	3
	___ 1:00-4:15	Romans (261)	Ridgeway	3
Friday	___ 8:30-12:00	Church History (241)	Daugherty	3
	___ 1:00-4:15	First and Second Corinthians (135)	Antemesaris	3
Extension Classes				
Monday	___ 7:00-9:30	TBA (Wesconnett church of Christ, Jacksonville)	TBA	2.5
Thursday	___ 6:00-8:30	Christians and Culture (165) (Tenth Street church of Christ, Apopka)	Kenyon	2.5

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