

Greater is He: A Primer on Spiritual Warfare for Kingdom Advance¹

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Jesus Christ is an all-sovereign Savior (Dan 7:13–14; Matt 28:18; John 17:2; Acts 2:36), who is progressively realizing his saving reign through his church by making disciples of all nations (Matt 28:19–20; Acts 1:8). Christians' hope is sure, for the living God in believers “is greater than he who is in the world” (1 John 4:4). Darkness is real, but in Christ we “have overcome” every evil force (4:4). He came “to proclaim liberty to the captives” and “to set at liberty those who are oppressed” (Luke 4:18; cf. Isa 61:1 with 42:7; 49:9, 25). He came “to deliver us from the present evil age” (Gal 1:4) and to empower us “to open . . . eyes” so that Jews and Gentiles alike “may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God” (Acts 26:18). In Christ, believers enjoy “divine power to destroy strongholds” (2 Cor 10:4), and we must “take up the whole armor of God” in order to stand firm and help others stand firm in the evil day (Eph 6:13). Jesus said, “The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly” (John 10:10). This essay attempts to help God's people enjoy in greater measure the fulness and fruitfulness that Christ alone brings. The

paper seeks to nurture holiness, maximize gospelizing, and mobilize missions for the sake of Christ's name.

The following *six* affirmations regarding spiritual warfare will guide this study:

1. God is the supreme ruler and orchestrator of all things including supernatural, natural, and moral evil.
2. God is stronger than the evil one, has decisively defeated him through Christ, and will defeat him entirely.
3. Christ frees believers from enslavement to the devil and grants them both a new identity as sons and full eternal security in him.
4. The evil one, the devil, works evil against both non-believers and believers.
5. Christ has given Christians authority to battle evil, grace to persevere through it, and the promise of full deliverance from it.
6. Christ is advancing his kingdom through his church.

1. GOD IS THE SUPREME RULER AND ORCHESTRATOR OF ALL THINGS INCLUDING SUPERNATURAL, NATURAL, AND MORAL EVIL

God sovereignly and mysteriously creates and controls all things—both light and darkness, the visible and the invisible—in ways that are always upright, just, and pure and in ways that work for his own glory (Deut 32:4, 29; Eccl 7:13–14; Isa 42:8; 45:7; Col 1:16; Heb 1:3).² He is the decisive administrator over both material and spiritual creation, and he institutes all lower authorities for his good ends (Dan 4:17; Ps 24:1; Rom 13:1). Thus, he is the one who ultimately governs evil powers to test (Deut 13:1–3; Job 1:6–8; 2:1–3), to punish (Judg 9:23) even through lies (1 Kgs 22:19–23), to torment (1 Sam 16:14–15),³ and to incite sin (2 Sam 24:1 with 1 Chr 21:1), all of which he uses for his virtuous purposes (see 2 Cor 12:7).

2. GOD IS STRONGER THAN THE EVIL ONE, HAS DECISIVELY DEFEATED HIM THROUGH CHRIST, AND WILL DEFEAT HIM ENTIRELY

Under God's sovereign control, Satan, whom we also know of as the evil one or devil, rules the world's kingdoms (Luke 4:5–7; John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11; 1 John 5:19). Christ is stronger than the evil one, and the Lord has purposed that through Christ his superior kingdom of light would contrast

with and ultimately overcome the devil's worldly kingdom of darkness (Ps 110:1; Matt 12:26, 28; Luke 10:18; John 12:31; Acts 26:17–18; Col 1:13; Eph 6:12; Rev 20:10). In that day, voices will declare, “The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever” (Rev 11:15; cf. 1 Cor 15:24–25).

John declared, “The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil” (1 John 3:8). This was to fulfill Yahweh's declaration: “The LORD will ... famish all the gods of the earth, and to him shall bow down, each in its place, all the lands of the nations” (Zeph 2:11). And again, “Turn to me and be saved, all the ends of the earth! For I am God, and there is no other. . . . To me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear allegiance” (Isa 45:22–23; cf. Rom 14:11; Phil 2:10). God moved in power with Christ, who has, through his life, death, and resurrection, bound “the strong man” (Mark 3:27) and subdued demonic forces that no others “had the strength to subdue” (5:4).⁴ He was the offspring of the woman who would crush the serpent's head (Gen 3:15; cf. 1 Cor 15:24–27; cf. Rom 16:20), and he was the offspring of Abraham who has taken possession of the gate of his enemies and through whom the world's curse will be completely overcome with blessing (Gen 22:17b–18). Jesus “is greater than he who is in the world” (1 John 4:4) and was sent “to proclaim liberty to the captives and . . . to set at liberty those who are oppressed” (Luke 4:18; cf. Isa 61:1 with 49:8–9, 25–26).

Through Jesus's life, death, and resurrection, God highly exalted Jesus and appointed him with all authority in heaven and on earth (Dan 7:13–14; Matt 28:18; Eph 1:19–23; Phil 2:8–11). In the process, God cast out the devil from his heavenly position (Luke 10:18; John 12:31; 16:11; Rev 12:9) and disarmed and shamed the demonic powers, cancelling all record of debt due to disobedience that we had before God and any legal claim of guilt the devil had on believers' lives (Zech 3:1–9; Rom 8:1; Col 2:14–15).⁵ God the Father has already subjected all things to Christ, will display so in the future, and will receive all things back at the end (1 Cor 15:24–28; Phil 3:20–21; Heb 2:6–10; 1 Pet 3:21–22).

3. CHRIST FREES BELIEVERS FROM ENSLAVEMENT TO THE DEVIL AND GRANTS THEM BOTH A NEW IDENTITY AS SONS AND FULL ETERNAL SECURITY IN HIM

3.1. God has freed those in Christ from the devil's chains

Because at the cross Jesus disarmed the rulers and authorities of this dark age, the devil no longer holds any legal sway over Christians' lives (Col 2:13–15).⁶ “There is . . . now no condemnation,” for Christ has paid our penalty and God has declared us righteous in him (Rom 5:8–9). In Christ, we “turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God” (Acts 26:18). Indeed, the Father “has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son,” resulting in our “redemption, the forgiveness of sins” (Col 1:13–14). God has “raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ” (Eph 2:6). Whereas we were “enslaved to the elemental spirits of the world” and following our father the devil (John 8:44; Gal 4:3; 1 John 3:10), in Christ every believer is “no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir through God” (Gal 4:7). Whereas the devil was our father, God has now claimed this role (John 8:44; 1 John 3:10). As part of the new creation in Christ (2 Cor 5:17), we have “received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God,” and now through him God empowers Christians to “understand the things freely given us by God” (1 Cor 2:12).

3.2. In Christ, God's love is ever present for believers, and believers remain eternally secure in Christ

In Christ, we are now “from God and have overcome” all the evil spirits who work in this world, which “lies in the power of the evil one” (1 John 4:4; 5:19). More specifically, “We know that everyone who has been born of God does not keep on sinning, but he who was born of God protects him, and the evil one does not touch him” (5:18). The reference to one “who was born of God” refers to Jesus, who is “greater than he who is in the world” (4:4) and thus is able to guard us from the evil one.⁷

First, when John says that a Christian will “not keep on sinning” but will enjoy Christ's protection in a way that “the evil one will not touch him” (5:18), he does not mean that Christians are already made functionally perfect or that our freedom in Christ means that the devil cannot lure us away into temporary evil. The apostle highlights that Christians sin (1:10–2:1) and implies that we can temporarily “love

the world or the things in the world” (2:15). However, true believers will confess their sins and find rest in their propitiatory advocate (1:9–2:2). Furthermore, the overall disposition of their lives will be not toward sin but toward loving the Father and doing his will, the result of which will be their abiding with him forever (2:17).

Second, in highlighting that Christ will protect believers and that the evil one will not touch them (5:18), John does not mean that the devil cannot torment or try believers in this present day. “The Son of God appeared . . . to destroy the works of the devil,” but they are not yet fully annihilated (3:8). Christians can still experience “tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword” (Rom 8:35), but not even demonic power can separate one of Christ’s sheep from God’s loving care (8:38–39; cf. John 10:28–29). Indeed, God loves all his own in the present, and he will ultimately guard every believer from Satan in a way that makes every Christian eternally secure (2 Thess 3:3).⁸ In Collin Kruse’s words, 1 John 5:18 highlights how “Jesus Christ will keep [those born of God] from being led astray by the false teaching.”⁹ Through Christ’s resurrection, God “has caused us to be born again to a living hope . . . to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven” for us, “who by God’s power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time” (1 Pet 1:3–5). In the present day, God has already “raised us up with [Christ] and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus” (Eph 2:6–7).

3.3. Having our souls secure in Christ still requires that we fight against evil and for holiness

After highlighting that God the Father “has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places” (Eph 1:3), Paul warned Christians that unrepentant sin could give the devil ground (*topos*) to work (4:27). He also stressed that we must “put on the whole armor of God” in order to “stand against the schemes of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places” (6:11–12).¹⁰

Paul urges believers, “Put to death . . . what is earthly in you . . . seeing that you have put off the old self [= man] with its practices and have put on the new self [= man], which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator” (Col 3:5, 9–10). Similarly, because we have died with Christ to sin, Paul charges

Christians to consider ourselves “dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus” (Rom 6:8–11). That is, we must not let sin “reign in [our] mortal body” (6:12). Thus, Paul charges, “Do not present your members to sin as instruments for unrighteousness, but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and your members to God as instruments for righteousness” (6:13). Here the apostle identifies how our old, pre-redeemed identity in Adam—the one the devil once enslaved—can resurface with its negative traits or tendencies. As believers, we must, therefore, guard ourselves from negative evil influences, for they can still challenge the Christian. And wherever sin has the potential to “reign” (6:12), the devil can work and torment.

4. THE EVIL ONE, THE DEVIL, WORKS EVIL AGAINST BOTH NON-BELIEVERS AND BELIEVERS

4.1. *Who is the devil, and how does he work?*

The term “Satan” means “adversary, opponent, accuser”¹¹ or, perhaps better, “executioner.”¹² The Scripture applies it most commonly as a title (“*the Satan*”; e.g., Zech 3:1–2; Job 1:6–9, 12; 2:1–4, 6–7; 2 Cor 11:14; Rev 2:9–10; 20:2) but also as a personal name (e.g., 1 Chr 21:1; Mark 3:23; Luke 22:3; 2 Cor 12:7) when referring to the ruler of this world and prince of demons (John 12:31; 2 Cor 4:4; Eph 2:2; Rev 12:9).¹³

Satan is also known as the devil, serpent, or dragon (Isa 27:1; Rev 12:9; 20:2). He masquerades as an angel of light (2 Cor 11:14) but is in fact a sinner, murderer, liar, and accuser (John 8:44; 1 John 3:8; Rev 12:10) who lures people away from God (Gen 3:1–5; 2 Cor 11:3; Rev 12:9) and seeks to steal, kill, and destroy (John 10:10; 1 Pet 5:8). The devil “sows” sons that follow him (Matt 13:39; cf. John 6:70; 8:44), and he “takes away” the word from those without root (Mark 4:15; Luke 8:12). He works as the head of an unholy “trinity” (Rev 16:13–14), whom the citizens of spiritual “Babylon” worship and/or heed (13:4, 12): the dragon Satan (Rev 12:9), the leopard-bear-lion beast who bears the dragon’s authority (13:2, 4), and the beastly false prophet who looks like a lamb but talks like a dragon, deceiving many (13:11–14; 16:13). These three represent, respectively, the world’s “king,” his political system, and the religious support of that system.¹⁴ At the end, Jesus, the true lion-lamb king, will conquer and eternally punish them and all associated with them (17:14; 19:20; 20:10; cf. 5:5–14; 22:3).

In the present age, the devil and his demons are scheming (Eph 6:11) and seeking

to trouble (Luke 6:18), sift (Luke 22:31), tempt (1 Cor 7:5; 1 Thess 3:5), deceive (2 Cor 11:3; Rev 12:9), outwit (2 Cor 2:11), harass (2 Cor 12:7), ensnare (1 Tim 3:7), devour (1 Pet 5:8), and accuse (Rev 12:10) everyone, including believers. Scripture shows that demons attached to individuals are able to openly converse with humans, to identify Christ, and to distinguish those in Christ from those who are not (Mark 1:24; 3:11; 5:7; Luke 4:41; Acts 16:17–18; 19:15).

Scripture as a whole most often associates demons with their nature or function and highlights how they are messengers of God himself (e.g., Judg 9:23; 1 Kgs 22:20–23; 2 Kgs 19:7; Job 1:6–12; cf. Deut 13:3; Ezek 14:9).¹⁵ Some examples include “a spirit of jealousy” (Num 5:30); “an evil/harmful spirit” (Judg 9:23; 1 Sam 16:14);¹⁶ “a lying spirit” (1 Kgs 22:23); “a spirit of confusion” (Isa 19:14); “a spirit of whoredom” (Hos 4:12); “a spirit of uncleanness” (Zech 13:2); “unclean spirits” (Matt 10:1); “you mute and deaf spirit” (Mark 9:25); “a disabling spirit” (Luke 13:11); “a spirit of divination” (Acts 16:16); “a spirit of slavery” (Rom 8:15); “deceitful spirits” (1 Tim 4:1); “a spirit of fear” (2 Tim 1:7). The NT describes demons ontologically as fallen angels (2 Pet 2:4; Jude 6; Rev 12:9). Following the pattern of the heavenly council (Dan 10:13, 21; 12:1; 1 Thess 4:16; Jude 9), they appear to have spheres of responsibility (Dan 10:13, 20–21; cf. Deut 32:8) and hierarchy of power (Rev 9:11), though most of the terms used do not clarify the specific relationship of ranks (e.g., 1 Cor 15:24; Eph 6:12; Col 1:16).¹⁷

Demons confront humans in varied ways and levels of intensity and use not only supernatural means but also sociological and physiological.¹⁸ At an initial level, evil forces (1) frustrate through means like obstruction, persecution, or physical ailment, or they (2) lie and tempt, awakening responses like guilt, fear, and doubt. At a more extreme but less frequent level, (3) demons intensely torment people, assaulting in harsher ways both from without and within.¹⁹ While the eternal destiny of those in Christ is absolutely secure, Scripture is clear that the devil can frustrate and harm believers, can deceive them into thinking that they are still enslaved to sin, and will negatively coerce and affect all who fail to resist him.

FIGURE 1. LEVELS OF DEMONIC INFLUENCE

Level 2	<i>Demonization: Intensified Torment</i>	
Level 1	<i>Frustration</i>	<i>Lies and Temptations</i>

4.2. *The devil's enslavement of non-believers*

All non-believers are slaves to demonic powers (John 8:34; Gal 4:3, 8–9; Col 2:8, 20; 2 Pet 2:19) and to fear of death (Heb 2:14–15). As the god of this world, the devil is blinding those who are spiritually dead (2 Cor 4:3–4), “ensnaring” them, having “captured” them “to do his will” (2 Tim 2:26).²⁰ He works within all “the sons of disobedience” as they willingly obey him, and he deceives them into following the passions of the flesh and into carrying out the desires of the body and the mind (Eph 2:1–3). “He who is in the world” (1 John 4:4) wants people to “love the world or the things in the world”—“the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride in possessions,” none of which are “from the Father” (2:15–16). These other “masters” or “loves” compete with God and stand as tempting instruments in the hand of the evil one (Matt 6:13, 24). To worship idols is to sacrifice to demons (Lev 17:7; Deut 32:17; Ps 106:37; 1 Cor 10:20), who stand behind all the world’s competing loves.

4.3. *The devil's evil work against those in Christ*

In the present age, the devil can exert significant influence over believers’ lives, both frustrating externally and inciting twisted thoughts and worldly desire internally.

4.3.1. Frustration

The devil “comes only to steal and kill and destroy” (John 10:10). We see the devil depriving Job of goods and family (Job 1:6–19), striking him with illness (Job 2:1–7), harassing Paul (2 Cor 12:7), hindering his missional movements (1 Thess 2:18), imprisoning and killing some in the church (Rev 2:10; cf. 3:9), making war on all Christians (12:17; 13:7), and demanding to have certain believers like Peter in order to shake them that they might fall (Luke 22:31). When seeking to give aid to Daniel, a heavenly messenger was held back by the demonic “prince of the kingdom of Persia” until Michael, “one of the [angelic] chief princes,” came to help him (Dan 10:12–14). Similar oppositions are seen in the way Jannes and Jambres stood against Moses and the truth he proclaimed (2 Tim 3:8; cf. Exod 7:11; 8:18; 9:11), in the way Elymas the magician opposed Paul and Barnabas’s gospel proclamation (Acts 13:6–10), and in the way the demonized slave girl with a spirit of divination annoyed Paul and distracted others from his ministry (Acts 16:16–18). Christians should expect such trials, and resisting the devil, firm in our faith, allows us to retain hope that, “after you have suffered a little

while, the God of all grace . . . will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you” (1 Pet 5:9–10).

4.3.2. *Lies and Temptations*

Scripture identifies demonic influence in sins like idolatry (Deut 32:17; 1 Cor 10:20), sexual immorality (1 Cor 7:5; Rev 18:2–3), unforgiveness (2 Cor 2:10–11), legalism (Gal 4:3–8), unresolved anger (Eph 4:27), deceitful teaching (1 Tim 4:1), misuse of the tongue (Jas 3:6), jealousy and selfish ambition (Jas 3:14–15), and false guilt (Rev 12:10). Many of these are also tagged “the works of the flesh”—“evil things” that stand in animosity to God’s kingdom and that resemble the lifestyles of “the sons of disobedience,” who are completely enslaved by the devil and whom God will throw with him into the lake of fire (Mark 7:21–23; 1 Cor 6:9–10; Gal 5:19–21; Eph 2:1–3; Rev 21:8).

From the beginning, the devil has been a liar (John 8:44). He moved Eve to question what was true (Gen 3:1–5; 2 Cor 11:3), and he presently terrorizes the world with deception (Rev 12:9) and temptation (1 Cor 7:5; 1 Thess 3:5). The devil can incite and tempt true God-followers to sin (1 Chr 21:1; Matt 4:1; cf. Mark 1:13; Luke 4:2, 13), and he can accuse them of sin, as if God never secured atonement (Zech 3:1). A demonic spirit worked through Eliphaz to bring false accusations against Job (Job 4:15–17). “The spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places” are waging war against those in Christ (Eph 6:12). They are working to overcome us by doubts (Jas 1:6–8 with 4:7–8), worries (1 Pet 5:6–8), or worldly passions (Mark 1:13; 1 Cor 7:5), and they are pushing us to turn from God (1 Thess 3:5). Satan can influence believers to set their minds against God (Matt 16:23) and can push them to temporarily deny Christ (Luke 22:31–32, 34). He may even be able to fill their hearts and to move them to lie to the Holy Spirit (Acts 5:3).

When those of us in Christ engage in sin, we are not walking in the Spirit (Gal 5:16–17) but are loving the world by gratifying the desires of the flesh and eyes and nurturing pride in possessions (1 John 2:15–16). We are forgetting our new identity in Christ and acting as though we are still sons of disobedience (Eph 2:2) and as though we want to be enslaved again to the world’s “weak and worthless elementary spirits” (Gal 4:9, author’s translation; cf. Col 2:8).²¹ We are sinfully yoking ourselves with unbelievers, allowing righteousness to partner with lawlessness, and allowing idols to defile God’s temple (2 Cor 6:14–16). We are letting “sin reign” in our mortal body and presenting our “members to sin as instruments of unrighteousness” (Rom 6:12–13). Paul warns that by failing

“to stand against the schemes of the devil” (Eph 6:11) and to guard ourselves by faith from “the flaming darts of the evil one” (6:16), believers can give space to the evil one, from or by which he can further wound, influence, scheme, and deceive (4:27). Elsewhere similar warnings speak of the devil holding believers in a “snare” (1 Tim 3:7) or even seeking to devour them (1 Pet 5:8). Nevertheless, we also learn that, in such situations, when believers do “submit” themselves to God and “resist the devil,” we can be assured that “he will flee” (Jas 4:7). Christians clearly have authority in Christ to not let sin “reign” and to not present their “members as instruments for unrighteousness” (Rom 6:12–13).

Thus, we must “stand firm . . . having fastened on the belt of truth”; we must “take up the shield of faith . . . and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God” (Eph 6:14, 16–17). We are to turn from anxiety “by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving” and to fill our minds with “whatever is true . . . honorable . . . just . . . pure . . . lovely . . . commendable” (Phil 4:6, 8). For those in Christ, the call is to “set your minds on things that are above” (Col 3:2) and to “renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ” (Tit 2:12–13).

4.4. Demonization: Having tormenting evil spirits

Along with frustrating, lying, and tempting, the devil and his demons also seek to intensely trouble (Luke 6:18), torment (Acts 5:16), and oppress (Acts 10:38) people, even at times indwelling them (Matt 12:43–45). These are extreme cases where Scripture speaks of evil spirits “coming upon” or “entering into” people, commonly resulting in elevated inner torment, outward abnormal manifestations, and/or extreme evil desires and activity. In referring to this phenomenon, the NT regularly employs the Greek participial form of the verb *daimonizomai*, which I translate “demonized.” This experience can accompany but stands distinct from the way Satan enslaves non-believers (Gal 4:3; Eph 2:1–3; 2 Cor 4:4), for the vast majority of unregenerate people are not tormented like this. As for believers, while some evangelicals question whether those in Christ can actually be indwelt by demons,²² all can affirm that the devil and his angels assault true Christians in intense ways—ways that are likely low-level forms of demonization.²³ This stated, while not all contexts are explicit regarding the location of demonic influence, Paul urges the believer to

not let *sin* “reign in your mortal body” (Rom 6:12) and to not present one’s “members to sin as instruments for unrighteousness” (6:13). He also contrasts “the desires of the flesh” with “the desires of the Spirit” (Gal 5:17) and notes how emotions like sinful anger can give the devil turf (*topos*) in one’s life (Eph 4:26–27).²⁴ These texts identify that, while a Christian’s core identity is new and safe in God (2 Cor 5:17; Eph 4:22–24; Col 3:9–10), Satan can still infect the inner-life of a person after he or she is regenerated.²⁵

4.4.1. An overview of demonic influence in the OT, the Gospels, and Acts

The OT, Gospels, and Acts speak in a number of ways about assaulting demonic influence. In the OT, God forbade worshipping other gods and demons (Exod 20:3–6; Lev 17:7) and engaging in the occult (Lev 19:31; Deut 18:10–14; Isa 8:19), and he promised to punish with death all who did (Lev 20:6, 27). There were some leaders who sought to end such practices (1 Sam 28:3, 9; 2 Kgs 23:24), but following in the ways of the nations (Gen 30:27; 44:15; Num 22:7; Deut 18:14; 1 Sam 6:2; Isa 19:3; Ezek 21:21), Israel often engaged in this evil (Lev 17:7; Deut 32:17; 1 Sam 28:7; 2 Kgs 17:17; 21:6; 1 Chr 10:13; 2 Chr 33:6; Ps 106:37[105:37]; Isa 8:19).

With respect to demonic influence, at the tenth plague against Egypt, Moses equated and yet distinguished Yahweh from “the destroyer” who would slay all the firstborn of the Egyptians: “For the LORD will pass through to strike the Egyptians, and when sees the blood on the lintel and on the two doorposts, the LORD will pass over the door and will not allow the destroyer to enter your houses to strike you” (Exod 12:23). Later, the psalmist described Yahweh’s plagues against Egypt as his loosing “on them the fury of his anger: wrath and indignation and distress—a troop of evil angels [*or* angels bringing evil]” (Ps 78:49, my translation). We find similar imagery in the account of David’s census, after which “the LORD sent pestilence on Israel,” but then “when the angel stretched out his hand toward Jerusalem to destroy it, the LORD relented from the calamity [lit., ‘evil’] and said to the angel who was working destruction among the people, ‘It is enough; now stay your hand’” (2 Sam 24:15–16). Significantly, the biblical narrators identify both Yahweh (2 Sam 24:1) and “Satan” (1 Chr 21:1) as influencing David to sin in taking the census, the former being the decisive mover and the latter being his agent.

We also learn that Yahweh sent “an evil spirit” between Abimelech and the leaders of Shechem, moving the latter to deal treacherously with the former

(Judg 9:23). Similarly, the narrator of Samuel spoke of a harmful spirit that would “come upon” and then later “depart from” King Saul; its presence would “torment” him and even move him to attempt to kill David (1 Sam 16:14–16, 23; 18:10; 19:9). We also find God sending a “lying spirit” to “entice” Ahab through the mouth of his prophets (1 Kgs 22:21–23; 2 Chr 18:20–22), a “spirit of confusion” that would work against Egypt (Isa 19:14), and a “spirit” of rumor against Assyrian King Sennacherib, moving him to depart from Jerusalem (Isa 37:7). While Yahweh was the decisive influence in Job’s loss and suffering (Job 1:11, 21–22; 2:5, 10), the Satan was the evil instrument, accomplishing God’s greater purposes (Job 1:9–12; 2:4–7).

In the NT, the Greek term *daimonizomai* shows up 13x (always in the Gospels) and consistently refers to someone under the direct influence or sway of one or more evil spirits (Matt 4:24; 8:16, 28, 33; 9:32; 12:22; 15:22; Mark 1:32; 5:15–16, 18; Luke 8:36; John 10:21). Some texts speak of demons “entering” (*eiserchomai*) and “dwelling” (*katoikeō*) within people (Matt 12:45; Mark 5:13; Luke 8:33), so we know that at least some who are demonized are housing unclean spirits. Other texts, however, are not as explicit, and the more common verbs associated with deliverance are broad enough to allow for the possibility that some who are demonized may have evil spirits only attached to them, oppressing from without—e.g., “go, be gone” (*hypagō*, Matt 4:10; 8:32; 16:23 with Mark 8:33), “depart, go away” (*aperchomai*, Matt 8:32; Luke 8:31), “come out, go away” (*exerchomai*, Matt 8:32; 12:43–44; Mark 1:25–26; 5:8, 13; Luke 8:2, 29, 33, 35, 38), and “cast out/away” (*ekballō*) (Matt 8:16, 31; 9:33–34; 12:24, 26–28; Mark 1:34, 39).²⁶ Because the Greek text uses the single verb *daimonizomai* to cover various levels of demonic assault and because the text is not explicit that every tormenting action includes indwelling, I prefer to speak of those who are “demonized” rather than those who are “possessed.”²⁷ To be *demonized* is to be tormented, oppressed, afflicted, or negatively influenced at a qualitatively higher level than is common for all peoples.²⁸ We see, therefore, a continuum of demonic influence, and Scripture tags only the elevated instances demonization.

Twice in the NT we read of those “with” (Greek *en*) a demon or evil spirit (Mark 1:23; 5:2). Because in both instances Jesus charges the demons to “come out of” or “go away from” (from *exerchomai*) the individuals (Mark 1:25; 5:8), it’s clear that those “with” demons are demonized.²⁹

Sixteen times in the NT (all in the Gospels and Acts) we read of individuals whom others believe “have” a demon or evil spirit. This can be one whom a

demon is actually negatively influencing or oppressing (Mark 5:15; 7:25; 9:17; Luke 4:33; 8:27; Acts 8:7; 16:16; 19:13; cf. Luke 13:11), or someone who is falsely accused of having a demon, whether John the Baptist (Matt 11:18; Luke 7:33) or Jesus (Mark 3:30; John 7:20; 8:48, 49, 52; 10:20). Most of the texts make absolutely clear that to “have” a demon is to be demonized, because the context also speaks of “demonization” (e.g., John 10:20–21) or of being “with” an unclean spirit (e.g., Mark 5:2, 15) or because we see present language of “casting out/away” (e.g., Mark 7:25–26; 9:17–18) or “coming out, going from” (e.g., Mark 5:8, 15; 9:17, 25; Luke 4:33, 35–36; 8:27, 29, 33; Acts 8:7; 16:16, 18; 19:12).

There are a number of other expressions in the Gospels and Acts, all of which appear to refer to demonization. Perhaps akin to the tormenting spirit in King Saul’s life, we read that the devil “put” evil desires into the heart of Judas (John 13:2) and “entered into” (*eisrchomai*) him, moving him to betray Jesus (Luke 22:3, 6; John 13:27). Similarly, we read of a man “in whom” was an evil spirit (Acts 19:15–16). Scripture speaks of those “afflicted with” unclean spirits (5:16; cf. 8:7) and of people healed “of evil spirits” (Luke 7:21; 8:2), some of whom demons have “gone out/away” (8:2). Furthermore, Scripture records that the devil “bound” someone with a disabling spirit (13:11, 16), another likely reference to demonization. Finally, recalling all that the Gospels record regarding Jesus’ ministry to the demonized, Luke says that Jesus healed many who were “oppressed” by the devil (Acts 10:38). This depiction occurs only here in Scripture, but it aptly associates “oppression” as the core nature of demonization.

4.4.2. *The characteristics of the demonized*

Drawing on the above texts, Scripture associates a number of contexts, conditions, and capacities with the demonized (fig. 2). Because not all characteristics are evident in every case, we should see these attributes as exemplary and not restrictive. Also, with respect to the conditions, some demonic assaults can be more “severe” (Matt 15:22) than others, especially where multiple demons are involved (Luke 11:26; cf. Mark 1:24[?]; 5:9; Luke 8:2). Furthermore, Scripture does not portray every demonized person as raving mad or struggling with self-harm. Some appear to only experience physical oppression, likely accompanied by deep discouragement (Luke 13:11); others are fully aware and strategically sinful, standing against Christ (Luke 22:3, 6; John 13:2, 27).

While all of the various characteristics are results of demonic influence, the fact that Scripture lists the casting away of demons alongside other forms of

healing (Matt 4:24; Mark 1:32; Luke 7:21; Acts 5:16; 8:7) means that *not every physical or mental illness/disorder is a result of demonization*.³⁰ At times, there may even be a combination of issues that are both physical and spiritual (e.g., Mark 9:20). Thus, proper pastoral and medical care demands careful, prayerful assessment, even working with those who have the gift of distinguishing between spirits (1 Cor 12:10; cf. e.g., John 1:47; 2:25; Acts 8:20–24; 13:8–11; 14:8–10; 16:16–18),³¹ so as to determine the precise nature of certain problems.

FIGURE 2. SOME CHARACTERISTICS OF DEMONIZED PEOPLE IN SCRIPTURE

	Explicit Characteristics of the Demonized	Explicit Result after Deliverance
Context	Homelessness (Luke 8:27)	
	Drawn toward contexts of death or wastelands (Mark 5:3, 5; Luke 8:27, 29)	
Condition	<i>Physical</i>	
	Mute (Matt 9:32; 12:22; Mark 9:17, 25)	Speaking (Matt 9:33; 12:22)
	Blind (Matt 12:22)	Seeing (Matt 12:22)
	Deaf (Mark 9:25)	
	Disabled, resulting in a bent over posture (Luke 13:11)	Straightened posture (Luke 13:13)
	<i>Mental</i>	
	Naked (Luke 8:27)	Clothed (Mark 5:15; Luke 8:35)
	Crying out or raving (1 Sam 18:10; Mark 1:23; 5:5; 9:26; Acts 8:7)	In his right mind (Mark 5:15; Luke 8:35)
	Self-harm like cutting (Mark 5:5) or being thrown into fire or water (Mark 9:23)	
	Evil, rebellious intent (John 13:2)	
	<i>Physical and/or Mental</i>	
	Throwing to the ground > rolling around and convulsing > foaming at the mouth > grinding teeth > becoming rigid (Mark 1:23; 9:18, 20, 26; Luke 4:35)	
Capacity	Fiercely strong resulting in the overpowering and/or wounding of others (Matt 8:28; Mark 5:3–4; Luke 8:29; Acts 19:16)	
	Able to practice divination and tell fortunes (Acts 16:16)	No longer able (Acts 16:19)
	Evil action (Luke 22:3, 6; John 13:2, 27)	

4.4.3. Demonization and the Christian

There are at least three reasons why the Christian church should expect to encounter people tormented by demons and should know that we are equipped to minister to them: (1) In this church age, two truths stand in tension: First, “the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of his

Christ have come,” and Christians have conquered the devil “by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony” (Rev 12:10–11). Second, the devil, the accuser, has been thrown down to earth “in great wrath, because he knows that his time is short,” and he now seeks “to make war” on the church (12:10, 12, 17). (2) Scripture anticipates the release of captives to be a primary part of the Messiah’s ministry (Luke 4:18; cf. Isa 42:6–7; 49:8–9, 25; 58:6; 61:1), and the Gospels, which were written after Christ’s resurrection for the churches, draw great attention to Christ’s freeing the demonized (e.g., Matt 4:24; 8:16; Luke 4:36). (3) Luke stresses how Jesus equipped both the Apostles and the rest of the disciples for this same task (Luke 9:1–2; 10:17–20), and the book of Acts both recalls Jesus’s deliverance ministry (Acts 10:38) and highlights how God used the Apostles to free the demonized (5:16; 19:12). Jesus’s declaration that he has given all his disciples “authority . . . over *all* the power of the enemy” (Luke 10:19) parallels his other affirmation that “the gates of hell shall not prevail against [the church]” (Matt 16:18). These statements are striking and demand great courage to believe. Also, when Jesus asserts that “nothing shall hurt you” (Luke 10:19), we must understand that he is speaking in eternal terms, for while some “will put to death . . . not a hair of your head will perish” but “by your endurance you will gain your lives” (21:16–19; cf. 12:4–7; Rom 8:38–39).

As noted, Scripture teaches that the devil “schemes” against both believers and non-believers (Eph 6:11). He is constantly hurling “flaming darts” at those in Christ (6:13), and he can deeply wound all who fail to defend themselves and offensively resist by means of the armor of God. The devil’s goal in all frustration and deception or temptation is to generate internal compromise, and at times he elevates his scheming to the point of torment and deep oppression, even against Christ-followers. For example, Luke 13:11–16 speaks of Jesus’s healing a devout woman, whom he tagged “a daughter of Abraham,” a category that for Luke appears to mean she was saved (Luke 19:9; contrast those whose father was the devil, not Abraham, in John 8:39, 44; cf. Gal 3:7).³² She “had a disabling spirit for eighteen years,” and “Satan bound her.” Nevertheless, after Jesus made her straight, she “glorified God.” No other clear signs of demonization are present in the text, but a demon still appears to have been causing her extended and extensive battle. Similarly, Paul identified that “a thorn was given me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to harass me” (2 Cor 12:7). We do not know what this “thorn” was, but it was likely associated in some way with “weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities” (12:10).

The language in neither of these texts demands an internal demonic presence, but both may still legitimately fall within the framework of “demonization” in the sense of demonic torment.³³ In Paul’s case, he resisted the devil, resulting *not* in the relief of the oppression but in the use of the pain as a God-given means of keeping him “from becoming conceited” (12:7). Three times Paul pleaded with the Lord to take the oppression away, but God chose instead to grant the apostle special persevering grace amidst his suffering “so that the power of Christ may rest upon me” (12:8–9).

Along with those texts just mentioned, there are at least three texts that likely identify Christians being demonized: Acts 5:3, 16; 19:12. Acts 5 opens by continuing a narrative growing out of the statement in 4:32 that “the full number of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one said that any of the things that belonged to him was his own, but they had everything in common.” We are told that a certain Christ-follower named Joseph sold a field and gave all the proceeds to the apostles for those in need (Acts 4:34–37). Luke then contrasts this story with the saga of Ananias and Sapphira, a married couple of professing believers that also sold property, retained some of the proceeds, but then declared that they were giving all their return to help others (5:1–2). Peter declared that Satan had “filled” Ananias’ “heart to lie to the Holy Spirit” (5:3). In light of the use of “filling” language elsewhere in Acts (cf. 2:2; 13:52),³⁴ the wording in Acts 5:3 suggests an internalized expansion of desire for evil, much like we see in the life of Judas, whom the devil entered (Luke 22:3; John 13:27) and “put it into the heart of Judas . . . to betray [Jesus]” (John 13:2; cf. Luke 22:6). The way Satan incited David to sin may also be comparable (1 Chr 21:1). The nature of Ananias and Sapphira’s sin may not be extreme enough to tag it demonization, but the language Luke uses would accord with it. While some still question whether Ananias and Sapphira were true believers, Luke clearly associates them with the believing community (Acts 4:32).³⁵ Furthermore, we know that Satan can incite true God-followers to sin when they let down their guard (1 Chr 21:1; Luke 22:31–32), and that God can punish sinful Christians with premature death (1 Cor 11:29–30), much like we see in the story of Ananias and Sapphira.

As the Jerusalem church continues to grow, Luke tells us that “many signs and wonders were regularly done among the people by the hands of the apostles” (Acts 5:12) and that “more than ever believers were added to the Lord” (5:14). The context explicitly identifies the multiplication of

“believers,” and then clarifies this statement by noting that among these hoards that gathered were people who brought “the sick and those afflicted with unclean spirits, and they were healed” (5:16). It is possible that at least some of those healed of unclean spirits were already Christ-followers.

The issue of demonization was clearly broader than Jerusalem, and during Paul’s extended ministry in Ephesus, God delivered many. Specifically, right in the context of identifying how Paul, while stationed in the city, reasoned and persuaded about the kingdom among Jews and Greeks from all over Asia and how there were disciples (Acts 19:1–10), Luke tells us that “God was doing extraordinary miracles by the hands of Paul, so that even handkerchiefs or aprons that had touched his skin were carried away to the sick, and their diseases left them and the evil spirits came out of them” (Acts 19:11–12). It is likely that at least some of these from whom spirits departed were already followers of Christ, for “many of those who were now believers came, confessing and divulging their practices” (19:18).³⁶

There are two more texts that some identify as supporting the demonization of true Christians—2 Corinthians 11:4 and Ephesians 4:27, but only the Ephesians text may point in this direction. Building off Acts 19:11–12, which identifies many in Ephesus whom God delivered from demonization, Paul teaches in Eph 4:27 that when we fail to resolve anger we sin and in turn surrender “turf” or supply “opportunity” (Greek = *topos*; NRSV = “room”; ESV = “opportunity”; NIV = “foothold”) to the evil one, by which he can further wound, influence, scheme, and deceive.³⁷ With Peter O’Brien and against J. Armitage Robinson, supplying Satan a chance to negatively impact does not *necessarily* imply an “opportunity for an entry of an evil spirit.”³⁸ It also does not necessarily mean increased torment to the point of demonization. Nevertheless, it does suggest increased negative effects and sway. The sphere of demonic ground is quite secondary (e.g., external vs. internal, physical vs. mental, etc.). Rather, as Payne notes, what is important to recognize is that demons truly “have the ability to connect themselves to true Christians.”³⁹ And because unresolved personal sins commonly supply the context for demonic oppression to take place in the lives of the demonized, Christians must “be imitators of God” (Eph 5:1), “be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might,” and “put on the whole armor of God” (6:10–11).

In 2 Corinthians 11:3–4, Paul speaks of professing believers who do not hesitate to hear the proclamation of “another Jesus,” to receive “a different

spirit,” or accept “a different gospel,” potentially following the pattern of Eve by letting Satan lead their minds astray from pure devotion to God. However, rather than speaking of demonization and the reception of demonic spirits, the apostle appears to be cautioning his hearers from false teachers who “promised more of the Spirit (i.e., health, wealth, and ecstatic experiences) to those who would keep more of the law (i.e., adding the stipulations of the old covenant to those of the new).”⁴⁰ That is, they were proclaiming a different portrayal of Jesus, the Spirit, and the gospel—one without suffering in the pattern of Christ. Paul is not directly addressing the possibility of demonization.

Many Christians question whether those following Christ can actually be indwelt by demons. Nevertheless, we have already highlighted how demonization is likely not limited to demonic indwelling but can include demonic association that results in elevated external or internal torment. The biblical authors do not apply the verb *daimonizomai* to known Christ-followers. However, with echoes of Christ’s own deliverance ministry (Acts 10:38), they do associate the phenomena with those seeking Jesus’s help in faith (Luke 13:11, 13) and with those tagged “believers” (Acts 5:3; cf. 5:16; 19:12). Furthermore, Paul himself, as he rightly pursued the Lord, experienced a deep level of demonic harassment that may actually be a low-level type of demonization (2 Cor 12:7).

God warned Israel against worshipping any gods other than Yahweh (Exod 20:3–6), and he charged them never to engage in occult practices (Lev 19:31; 20:6, 27; Deut 18:10–12). Similarly, Paul also stresses that Christians should neither “be participants with demons” (1 Cor 10:20–21) nor seek “fellowship . . . with darkness” (2 Cor 6:14–16; cf. 1 Cor 3:16–17). Nevertheless, he bemoans the fact that some professing believers still do these things, forgetting their new identity in Christ. Indeed, we know that “in later times some will depart from the faith by devoting themselves to deceitful spirits and teachings of demons” (1 Tim 4:1; cf. 2 Tim 2:26). Thus, Paul asserts: “See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the world, and not according to Christ” (Col 2:8; cf. 20). And again, “When you did not know God, you were enslaved to those that by nature are not gods. But now that you have come to know God, or rather to be known by God, how can you turn back again to the weak and worthless elementary principles [= spirits] of the world, whose slaves you want to be once more?”

(Gal 4:8–9; cf. 4:3; Rom 6:12–13). “The devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour,” but as believers we must “resist him” (1 Pet 5:8–9). While true believers are protected eternally in Christ, there is still a sphere in the present age wherein Christians can serve sin and the devil.

Pastorally, we know that, due to past abuses, poor choices, belief in lies, or (as in Paul’s case in 2 Cor 12:7) even a proper pursuit of God, professing Christians can experience demonic torment that at times manifests characteristics of the demonized listed above (fig. 2). We also know that many of these have enjoyed freedom from such oppression when they and godly leaders with them engage in different types of warfare against the powers of darkness. Regardless of whether the demonic torment comes internally or externally, we believe that when professing believers experience demonic oppression—including deep sinful bondage, abusive tendencies, sustained self-deprecating thoughts, or excessive anxieties or fears, Christians should stand with them in seeking deliverance—pursuing repentance and holiness, praying for help and freedom, and directly engaging the powers of darkness (Eph 6:12, 18; Jas 5:13–15).

5. CHRIST HAS GIVEN CHRISTIANS AUTHORITY TO BATTLE EVIL, GRACE TO PERSEVERE THROUGH IT, AND THE PROMISE OF FULL DELIVERANCE FROM IT

5.1. A Christian’s Authority in Christ

Through his Spirit, Christ gives Christians authority to overcome the powers of darkness, and by this authority believers must fight the fight of faith and resist the devil until the Lord frees us completely from evil’s influence.⁴¹ Paul urged Timothy to “wage the good warfare, holding faith and a good conscience” (1 Tim 1:18–19). The Lord has granted Christians authority to fight and grace to persevere.

The one to whom God has given full universal dominion is ever-present with believers (Matt 28:18, 20). Those in Christ are now raised and seated with him, under whose feet God has subjected all principalities and powers (Eph 1:20–23; 2:4–6; Col 2:9–10; 3:1; cf. 1 Cor 15:24–28; Heb 2:6–10).

Just as Jesus was with his apostles to free the demonized (Luke 9:1–2) and to empower discipleship and fruitfulness (Matt 28:18–20; John 15:4–5, 8), so he is with all Christians in power. He frees us to enjoy salvation past (Rom 8:24; Eph 2:8), present (1 Cor 1:18; 15:2), and future (Rom 5:8–9). He

equips us to fight the good fight of faith (1 Tim 1:18; 6:12; 2 Tim 4:7), and he enables us to destroy enemy strongholds of all kinds through his name (2 Cor 10:3–4).⁴² This includes the right to liberate the demonized (Luke 10:17–19; Acts 5:16; 8:7; 16:16–18; 19:12),⁴³ but more often it relates to resisting the devil by not embracing all that is in the world (1 John 2:16–17) but by treasuring Christ (Matt 13:44–46; Phil 1:20–21; 3:8). Sam Storms notes that the authority Jesus gives Christians is “the right and power to act as if Jesus himself were present” (Luke 10:16).⁴⁴

FIGURE 3. LEVELS OF DEMONIC INFLUENCE

Level 2	<i>Demonization: Intensified Torment</i>	
Level 1	<i>Frustration</i>	<i>Lies and Temptation</i>

In Christ, believers have already “overcome the evil one” (1 John 2:13–14). We have eternal security because he has promised that nothing can separate us from his love (John 10:28–29; Rom 8:38–39; 1 John 5:18) and that he will ultimately preserve us from Satan’s clutches (2 Thess 3:3).⁴⁵ Nevertheless, we have seen that believers must be ready to confront frustrations, lies and temptations, and demonization, all of which are different schemes of the devil. Some elements of a proper Christian response are common, regardless of his attack strategy, whereas other elements of our fight of faith are different, depending on the nature of his attack.

5.2 How to fight and persevere

5.2.1. Confronting every demonic scheme

Against every scheme of the devil, we must “be awake and be sober” (1 Thess 5:6, 8). We must “be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might” and “put on the full armor of God,” taking our stand on truth, resting fully in Christ’s purchased righteousness, being ready to work gospel-wrought peace, believing in God’s promises, thinking and acting fully in light of our salvation, offensively engaging by means of God’s word, and wrapping every activity in prayer (Eph 6:10–18).⁴⁶ Specifically, following Christ’s pattern (John 17:15) and instruction (Matt 6:13), we pray to the Father, “Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.”⁴⁷ Trusting in the power of “the Christ, the son of the living

God” (Matt 16:16), and working for God’s glory (1 Cor 10:31), we should engage the gates of hell confident that the devil’s schemes cannot kill our joy or withstand the church’s offensive (Matt 16:18; 2 Cor 5:10; Phil 1:20–21; 4:4). Indeed, having the keys of the kingdom by which we “know, understand, and proclaim the terms on the basis of which entrance into or exclusion from the kingdom of God is granted,”⁴⁸ what we bind on earth will have already been bound in heaven, and what we loose on earth will have already been loosed in heaven (Matt 16:19)—all because Christ has already bound the devil (Matt 12:29). By resisting or standing firm against the devil (Eph 6:13; Jas 4:7; 1 Pet 5:9), we “employ the authority and power given us by God to restrict his/their activities, to restrain his/their efforts, to thwart his/their plans.”⁴⁹

5.2.2. *Confronting frustration*

When Satan obstructs, persecutes, or brings physical ailment, Scripture is absolutely clear that Christians should expect such frustrations as necessary parts of our growth in grace. Just as Christ carried his cross, we should expect to bear ours (Ps 34:19; Luke 9:22–23). Such tribulations will include persecution for the sake of Christ’s name (Matt 10:22, 25; Luke 10:3; John 15:18, 20; 16:33). Nevertheless, as Paul’s own life shows, they will likely include even broader forms of trial, including physical challenge (2 Cor 6:4–5; 11:23–28; Phil 4:12–13). Paul was convinced that such tribulations are inescapable for believers (Acts 14:22; Rom 8:17; Phil 1:29; 1 Thess 3:3; 2 Tim 3:12), supplying a necessary means for growth in godliness (Rom 5:3–5; cf. Jas 1:2–4). Also, aligning with the teaching of Job 1–2, Paul did not hesitate to view such trials as harassments from the devil, but he was also convinced that God ordained them for his good—i.e., to keep him from becoming conceited (1 Cor 12:7–10; cf. 2 Cor 1:8–9). The church must stand firm in such opposition, for this is part of the way “the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places” (Eph 3:10). Peter stressed that through our suffering we identify with Christ (1 Pet 4:12–13, 19), and the author of Hebrews emphasized that God’s discipline nurtures holiness and righteousness (Heb 12:7–8, 10–11).

When faced with suffering, we must “be sober-minded” and “watchful,” for through such instances the devil wants to devour faith, force compromise, and choke out the word so that it proves unfruitful (Mark 4:16–19; 1 Pet 5:8). When encountering trials, our persevering trust is motivated by both Christ’s

example and God's future promises (Heb 10:34; 12:3; 13:12–14). We should correct opponents with gentleness (2 Tim 2:25–26). We must turn from anxiety with prayer and thanksgiving (Phil 4:6–7), and we must humble ourselves before God by casting our anxieties on him, confident that he cares and that he will ultimately restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish us (1 Pet 5:6–7, 10). In this way, we “resist” the devil, “firm in our faith” (5:9).

5.2.3. *Confronting lies and temptations*

Karl Payne helpfully notes that we can identify as demonic a voice, word, idea, or impression the accuses us if it (1) violates Scripture, (2) is not specific but so general that we are not even sure what we did wrong, and/or (3) is consistently demeaning with second person “you” statements.⁵⁰ The devil is a liar (John 8:44), soliciting our surrender and tempting us to sin. With respect to the twisting of thoughts and allurements to iniquity, we must commit to think on “whatever is true . . . honorable . . . just . . . pure . . . lovely . . . commendable . . . excellent . . . and praise worthy” (Phil 4:8). We must “flee youthful passions and pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace” (2 Tim 2:22). And we must determine to “not love the world or the things in the world,” and we must “keep [ourselves] from idols” (1 John 2:15–16; 5:21). One key way we can escape the corruption of the world is by trusting God's precious and very great promises (2 Pet 1:4). In evil days, we must “look carefully” how we walk, “not as unwise but as wise,” and we must “be filled with the Spirit” (Eph 5:15–18). We must “give no ground to the devil” (author's translation) but must instead “be renewed in the spirit of [our] minds” and “be imitators of God,” speaking truth in love, not retaining anger, doing honest work with our hands, speaking edifying and rightly placed words, never grieving the Holy Spirit, putting away all forms of bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, slander, and malice, being kind to one another always, walking in love, fleeing sexual immorality, and guarding against all other forms of sin (Eph 4:21–5:5). We must guard ourselves from “an evil, unbelieving heart” and must “exhort one another every day” that no one will “be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin” (Heb 3:12–14). We must “submit” ourselves to God and “resist the devil,” for only in this way will he “flee” (Jas 4:7). We do this by drawing near to God, cleansing our hands, purifying our hearts, being wretched and mournful, humbling ourselves before the Lord, confident that when we do, he will draw near to us and exalt us (4:8–10). We should receive with thanksgiving all

of God's good gifts (1 Tim 4:1–5), yet engage in them with faith, love, and wisdom (Rom 14:23–15:2; Eph 5:15).

5.2.4. *Confronting demonization*

Scripture is clear that, apart from the power of God, ultimately manifest in Christ, humans have no authority to confront demonization (Acts 19:13–16; cf. Matt 12:27).⁵¹ Christ has already overcome the “strong man” (Mark 3:22–27; cf. Col 2:15), and demons recognize and fear Christ's authority (Mark 1:24; 5:7; 9:38–39; Luke 9:39; Acts 19:15).⁵² With this, Christ gives all who are in him authority to free those with tormenting evil spirits (Luke 10:17–20; cf. Acts 5:16; 8:7; 16:16–18; 19:12). God's power makes “all things . . . possible for one who believes” (Mark 9:23; cf. 10:27).

The Lord calls his church to “test the spirits” of teachers to see whether they are from God; those that affirm Jesus' incarnation are from God whereas those that do not are of the antichrist (1 John 4:1–3). God also gives certain saints the “ability to distinguish between spirits” (1 Cor 12:10), a spiritual gift that seems evident in the ministries of Jesus (John 1:47; 2:25), Peter (Acts 8:23), and Paul (Acts 13:8–11; 14:8–10; 16:16–18).

When those in Christ are faced with cases of demonic torment, we should carefully and prayerfully assess the nature and cause, stand wholly in the armor of God and prayer (Eph 6:10–18), and then engage with a holistic approach that is saturated with prayer, addresses sin, reminds of God's promises, and takes the authority that is in Christ to cast away all demonic spirits, charging them to stop holding sway, to depart, and never to return (e.g., Luke 10:17–20; Mark 9:25; Acts 16:18). While some today assert that Christians must identify, denounce, and engage territorial spirits (like rulers and authorities overseeing specific geographical regions),⁵³ I see no biblical evidence to suggest that God has called believers to confront territorial rulers.⁵⁴ Nevertheless, when the devil and his minions torment individuals, Christ has given us authority and calls us to extend his ministry of deliverance.⁵⁵ Clinton Arnold proposes the following helpful pattern for dealing with demonic influence:⁵⁶

1. Draw near to God, knowing that he will in turn draw near to you (Jas 4:8; Ps 91:9).
2. Resist the devil and his demons, believing that as you do, he must flee (Eph 6:11–13; Jas 4:7; 1 Pet 5:9). Resisting entails nine convictions and actions:
 - A. Give attention to the area that has made you susceptible, whether

one has intentionally invited demonic presence (Lev 19:31; Deut 18:10–11), bears residual influence from the past (Exod 20:5; 1 Kgs 15:3; Mark 9:21; John 9:2), unintentionally invited their presence (Eph 4:27; 1 Tim 4:1–2; Jas 3:14–15), or is experiencing special attacks (Luke 22:31; Eph 6:13; 2 Cor 12:7).

- B. Determine to resist (Eph 6:11, 13; Jas 4:7; 1 Pet 5:9).
- C. Know who you are in Christ (Eph 1:17–19).
- D. Know your resources in Christ (Rom 6; Eph 2:1–10; 6:10–20; Col 2:9–15).
- E. Deal with their ground for attack, renouncing and decisively turning away from ungodly involvements and sin (1 Thess 1:9; 1 John 1:9; cf. Eph 6:14), renouncing your connections to ungodly lifestyles, deeds, and affiliations in your extended family (1 Kgs 15:3, 26, 34; 22:52), and asking God to grant strength for endurance (Luke 22:32; 2 Cor 12:8–10; Col 1:11).
- F. If necessary, deal directly and firmly with the demonic spirit (see below).
- G. Be meaningfully attached to the body of Christ (Heb 3:12–14; 10:24–27).
- H. Pray and solicit prayer support (2 Cor 1:11; Phil 1:19).
- I. Expect Christ to give victory (Jas 4:7).

With respect to engaging directly with demonic spirits, when Satan twisted Scripture and tempted Jesus in the wilderness, the Lord confronted the evil one with Scripture (Matt 4:4, 7, 10) and commanded him directly, “Be gone, Satan!” (Matt 4:10). Similarly, when annoyed by a spirit that was distracting his work of the gospel, Paul spoke to the demon, “I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her,” and it did (Acts 16:18). Elsewhere, we can see a general pattern to how Jesus delivered people who were demonized, but not all elements are always present:⁵⁷

1. Jesus discerned the nature and extent of the demonic activity (Mark 5:9; 9:21–22).
2. Jesus secured the name of the demon(s) (Mark 5:9) and then restricted its/their activity, often telling him/them not to speak in order to not yet make known he was the Christ (Mark 1:25, 34; 3:12; 5:13; cf. 3:27).
3. Jesus commanded the demon(s) (whether mentally or audibly) to depart and never return (Mark 1:25; 7:29; 9:25; cf. Luke 11:24–26); this rebuke

was often immediately followed by the demonized person crying, convulsing, and then lying as if dead (Mark 1:26; 9:26).

While the NT examples of deliverance often include these three stages, Jesus does note that some encounters will require sustained prayer so that the messenger of God's deliverance is fully surrendered in faith to Christ's authority (Matt 17:19–20; Mark 9:19, 29). We know that unresolved, unrepentant sin supplies "place" for the devil to work (Eph 4:27), and commonly it is such unaddressed sins (which means *all* sins for those not in Christ) that supply the point or ground of entry for demonic powers. While demons are liars (John 8:44), Christ's authority can compel demons to speak the truth (Mark 1:24; 5:9). Though they resist (Mark 1:26; 5:7–8; 9:26), they cannot ultimately withstand an offensive attack (Matt 16:18) but must submit to and heed Christ's ambassadors, for we represent Christ himself (Luke 10:16).⁵⁸

The Christian's hope: Jesus "gave himself up for our sins to deliver us from the present evil age" (Gal 1:4). Today, "we do not yet see everything in subjection to [Christ]" (Heb 2:8). But all things are under his control, and "after destroying every rule and every authority under his feet" including "death," he will then deliver "the kingdom to God the Father" (1 Cor 15:24). Jesus became like us "that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery" (Heb 2:14–15). God has already "disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame by triumphing over them in [Christ]" (Col 2:15), and Jesus has already "abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel" (2 Tim 1:10). Nevertheless, we await the day when "Death and Hades" will be "thrown into the lake of fire" (Rev 20:14)—the day when God "will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away. . . . No longer will there be anything accursed, but the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in [the city], and his servants will worship before him" (Rev 21:4; 22:3).

6. CHRIST IS ADVANCING HIS KINGDOM THROUGH HIS CHURCH

God empowered Jesus during his earthly ministry "to proclaim good news to the poor" and "liberty to the captives" and "to set at liberty those who are

oppressed” (Luke 4:18). With authority and power he exorcised unclean spirits (4:36; cf. 4:41; 6:18; 9:42; 13:11–13) and both attacked and overcame Satan, the strong man (11:14–23). Out of this sovereignty, Jesus gave his apostles and the seventy-two authority and power, making demonic spirits subject to them and sending them out “to tread on serpents and scorpions” and “over the power of the enemy” and to proclaim the arrival of God’s kingdom (9:1–2; 10:19–20). This is some of what “Jesus began to do and teach” between his birth and ascension (Acts 1:1), and now through his church and by his Spirit he continues to do and to teach as his kingdom advances around the globe (Acts 1:8; cf. 16:7). The book of Acts and the Epistles bear witness to this advance, which will culminate in every knee bowing and every tongue confessing “that Jesus Christ is Lord” (Phil 1:10–11) and with his ransomed bride from “every tribe and language and people and nation” reigning with him forever on the earth (Rev 5:9–10).

Today the church engages in spiritual warfare when it stands as Christ’s agents for kingdom advance by confronting demonic strongholds and by heralding the good news of God’s saving reign in Christ. That is, spiritual warfare is part of the church’s mission in the 21st century. In Eph 6:10–11, Paul charged the Ephesian Christians: “Be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil.” In large measure, the whole of Eph 6:10–19 summarizes the thrust of the entire letter, and central to this is the reality of the church’s being “in the Lord” or “in Christ” (cf. e.g., 1:1, 3, 5, 9, 12, etc.), who is reigning “far above all rule and authority and power and dominion” (1:21) and who has redeemed his church to make “known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places” the “mystery of Christ,” which is the gospel and all its implications (3:4, 8–10).⁵⁹ Significantly, when referring to the armor of God, the apostle likely alludes to four texts in Isaiah, where the prophet portrays the coming Messiah as king (11:5), servant (49:2; 52:7–12), and anointed conqueror (59:15b–20).⁶⁰ In these texts, Isaiah describes the Messiah’s kingdom mission of salvation by which he will bring global justice, initiate a new exodus, and inaugurate the new creation—each theme of which informs Ephesians.⁶¹ Mark Owens notes that Paul draws on Isaiah to identify that Christ’s church is “a community of ‘divine warriors’ who continue Christ’s mission by extending the new creation inaugurated by His sacrificial death and resurrection.”⁶²

The NT authors regularly identify Christ’s mission with the church’s mission. Whereas God originally commissioned his servant-person to “bring back the

preserved of Israel” and to be “a light for the nations, that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth” (Isa 49:6; Acts 26:22–23), because Paul and Barnabas were in Christ, it became their mission (Acts 13:46–47). While originally Yahweh asserted of his servant-person, “How beautiful upon the mountain are the feet of *him* who brings good news” (Isa 52:7), the watchmen who hear his message then “lift up their voice” and “sing for joy” (52:8), which is why Paul then switches to plural when he cites the text, identifying Christ’s church as these watchmen and the church’s feet as carrying on the feet of the Messiah: “How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, ‘How beautiful are the feet of *those* who preach the good news!’” (Rom 10:15).

Dressed in the Messiah’s armor, the church is at war for a kingdom advanced that is certain. We have the highest power for the greatest task, engaging in missions for the sake of worship. We seek “the obedience of faith for the sake of [Jesus Christ’s] name among all the nations” (Rom 1:5), and we do so with his Word and in all the strength he supplies “in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ” (1 Pet 4:11). To withstand in the evil day (Eph 6:13), Paul stresses that we must prepare defensively by grounding ourselves in truth, righteousness, the gospel of peace, faith, and salvation (6:14–17a)—that is, “by living *out* and living *in light* of the victory achieved by Christ.”⁶³ We must also engage offensively by proclaiming God’s Word and by “praying at all times in the Spirit” (6:17b–18). Proclaiming the Word happens both when confronting the dark powers amid temptation (Matt 4:1–11) and when heralding the good news, which alone can save (1 Pet 1:25). Through these means we “extend Christ’s victory and the new creation” (Eph 1:10, 20–22).⁶⁴

CONCLUSION

This study has argued for the following six affirmations: (1) God is the supreme ruler and orchestrator of all things including supernatural, natural, and moral evil. (2) God is stronger than the evil one, has decisively defeated him through Christ, and will defeat him entirely. (3) Christ frees believers from enslavement to the devil and grants them both a new identity as sons and full eternal security in him. (4) The evil one, the devil, works evil against both non-believers and believers. (5) Christ has given Christians authority to battle evil, grace to persevere through it, and the promise of full deliverance

from it. (6) Christ is advancing his kingdom through his church.

All believers experience levels of demonic oppression or torment, whether due to special attacks (Luke 22:31; Eph 6:13; 2 Cor 12:7), to intentionally inviting the demonic presence (Lev 19:31; Deut 18:10–11), to unintentionally inviting the demonic presence (Eph 4:27; 1 Tim 4:1–2; Jas 3:14–15), or through residual influence from the past (Exod 20:5; 1 Kgs 15:3; Mark 9:21; John 9:2). Furthermore, in this life, all those in Christ at times fail to resist the devil's lies and schemes. Whether by giving in to anxiety, nurturing fear, having empty devotional times, withdrawing from biblical community, sustaining anger or bitterness, or engaging in other sins, we open our lives up to the devil's work (Eph 4:27), forgetting that the temple of God and idolatry should not mix (2 Cor 6:14–16). In turn, demonic forces are freed to stir up unhealthy passions in the flesh and to move Christians to live false identities that resemble their old man (see 1 Cor 6:9–11; Eph 2:1–3). Thus, whether due to unintentional or intentional activity, we as believers must be awake and sober, hoping in our coming salvation, standing firm in the armor of God, and resisting the devil, trusting fully in Christ's power and faithfulness (Eph 6:13–17; 1 Thess 5:6, 8).

The risen Christ presently sits at the right hand of the Father and reigns above “all rule and authority and power and dominion” in both this age and the age to come (Eph 1:21). In him God has already “disarmed the rulers and authorities [of the heavenly realms] and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him” (Col 2:15), and Jesus will destroy them all completely at the end (1 Cor 15:24). Today, every person in Christ is “by God's power . . . being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time” (1 Pet 1:5; cf. 2 Thess 3:3). Yet, knowing that his end is close (Rev 12:12), Satan and his demonic forces are deceiving (12:8) and scheming (Eph 6:11–12)—frustrating through obstruction, persecution, or physical trial; lying and tempting; and, among a minority, tormenting from within or without. Standing in the authority and victory of Christ, when Christians experience Satan's harassment through suffering of all sorts, God calls us to “be sober minded,” to “be watchful,” and to “resist him, firm in [our] faith,” confident that in due course the Lord will “restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish” us (1 Pet 5:8–10; cf. 1 Thess 5:8–10). When Satan lies to our minds or seeks to awaken evil desire within, God charges those in Christ to “submit yourselves . . . to God” and to “resist the devil” and promises that in turn “he will flee” (Jas 4:7). When believers encounter those who are under demonic

influence, we should prayerfully help them resist the devil by proclaiming the gospel and, as necessary, by confronting and casting out/away the evil powers in faith and in the authority of Jesus (Luke 10:19). Finally, we must press ahead through bold proclamation, working to see those living in darkness reconciled to the God of light (2 Cor 4:3–6; 5:20) and working to bring about “the obedience of faith for the sake of [Jesus Christ’s] name among all the nations” (Rom 1:5). In all things, Christians must “wage the good warfare, holding faith and a good conscience,” lest we shipwreck our faith (1 Tim 1:18–19).⁶⁵ Jesus Christ is stronger, for “he who is in you is greater than he who is in the world” (1 John 4:4). His kingdom’s advance is certain, and he will soon save completely the multi-ethnic bride for which he died and rose and now reigns.

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1. I drafted an earlier version of this study between 2017–2018 for my fellow north campus elders of Bethlehem Baptist Church, Minneapolis, MN. We were ministering to a rising number of demonized individuals among the members and non-members alike, and I was facing demonic challenges in my short-term ministry trips in Africa. I thank my fellow elders, along with a number of other men and women from the congregation, who served with me to see Christ set captives free and comfort the oppressed. I also thank them, my doctoral fellow Brian Verrett, and my colleague Dr. Joey Allen for thoughtfully engaging this study and helping to make it better. May the Lord use this paper to bring greater help and hope as his kingdom is realized on earth as it is in heaven.
 2. See John Piper, *Providence* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2021). Bethlehem’s Elder Affirmation of Faith (EAF) §3.2 states, “We believe that God upholds and governs all things . . . all in accord with His eternal, all-wise purposes to glorify Himself, yet in such a way that He never sins, nor ever condemns a person unjustly; but that his ordaining and governing all things is compatible with the moral accountability of all persons created in His image.” EAF §5.3 further notes, “We believe God subjected the creation to futility, and the entire human family is made justly liable to untold miseries of sickness, decay, calamity, and loss. Thus all the adversity and suffering in the world is an echo and a witness of the exceedingly great evil of moral depravity in the heart of mankind; and every new day of life is a God-given, merciful reprieve from imminent judgment, pointing to repentance.”
 3. Peter Horrobin, *Healing through Deliverance: The Foundation and Practice of Deliverance Ministry*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Chosen Books, 2003), 180.
 4. Bethlehem’s EAF §6.2 declares, “We believe that Jesus Christ lived without sin, though He endured the common infirmities and temptations of human life. He preached and taught with truth and authority unparalleled in human history. He worked miracles, demonstrating His divine right and power over all creation: dispatching demons, healing the sick, raising the dead, stilling the storm, walking on water, multiplying loaves, and foreknowing what would befall Him and His disciples, including the betrayal of Judas and the denial, restoration, and eventual martyrdom of Peter.”
 5. Bethlehem’s EAF §7.3 states, “We believe, moreover, that the death of Christ did obtain more than the bona fide offer of the gospel for all; it also obtained the omnipotent New Covenant mercy of repentance and faith for God’s elect. Christ died for all, but not for all in the same way. In His death, Christ expressed a special covenant love to His friends, His sheep, His bride. For them He obtained the infallible and effectual working of the Spirit to triumph over their resistance and bring them to saving faith.” Bethlehem’s EAF §8.3 says, “We believe that, apart from the effectual work of the Spirit, no one would come to faith, because all are dead in trespasses and sins; that they are hostile to God, and morally unable to submit to God or please Him, because the pleasures of sin appear greater than the pleasures of God. Thus, for God’s elect, the Spirit triumphs over all resistance, awakens the dead, removes blindness, and manifests Christ in such a compellingly beautiful way through the Gospel that He becomes irresistibly attractive to the regenerate heart.”

6. G. K. Beale, *Colossians and Philemon*, BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2019), 266.
7. Colin G. Kruse, *The Letters of John*, Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 166.
8. Bethlehem's EAF §10.6 states, "We believe that all who are justified will win this fight. They will persevere in faith and never surrender to the enemy of their souls. This perseverance is the promise of the New Covenant, obtained by the blood of Christ, and worked in us by God Himself, yet not so as to diminish, but only to empower and encourage, our vigilance; that so we may say in the end, I have fought the good fight, but it was not I, but the grace of God which was with me."
9. Kruse, *The Letters of John*, 196.
10. For a helpful synthesis of the seven "weapons" in Eph 6:10–20 for responding to the powers of darkness, see Clinton E. Arnold, 3 *Crucial Questions about Spiritual Warfare* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1997), 42–43. For a treatment assessing the background for Paul's use of "rulers" and "authorities," see Ronn A. Johnson, "The Old Testament Background for Paul's Use of 'Principalities and Powers'" (PhD diss., Dallas Theological Seminary, 2004).
11. See Ludwig Koehler, Walter Baumgartner, and Johann Jakob Stamm, *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*, ed. and trans. M. E. J. Richardson, 2 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 1994), 3:1317; s.v. יְהוָה; Walter Bauer et al., eds., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 916–17; s.v. σατάν.
12. Stokes argues that the term actually refers to lethal, physical attack in all of its biblical occurrences and is better rendered "executioner." Ryan E. Stokes, "Satan, Yhwh's Executioner," *JBL* 133.2 (2014): 251–70.
13. Scholars dispute whether "Satan" in 1 Chr 21:1 is indeed the proper name of the devil, the prince of demons. Stokes, for example, sees it as a superhuman angelic adversary that operates as an emissary of Yahweh but not necessary the devil. Ryan E. Stokes, "The Devil Made David Do It ... Or Did He? The Nature, Identity, and Literary Origins of the Satan in 1 Chronicles 21:1," *JBL* 128 (2009): 91–106; cf. Sara Japhet, *I and II Chronicles: A Commentary*, OTL (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1993), 374–75; Michael S. Heiser, *Demons: What the Bible Really Says about the Powers of Darkness* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham, 2020), 79–80. For some that affirm 1 Chr 21:1 refers to the devil himself, see Martin J. Selman, *1 Chronicles: An Introduction and Commentary*, TOTC 10 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1994), 203–204; Paul Evans, "Divine Intermediaries in 1 Chronicles 21: An Overlooked Aspect of the Chronicler's Theology," *Bib* 85.4 (2004): 545–58.
14. So, too, G. K. Beale, *The Book of Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (NIGTC; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1999), 831.
15. Johnson, "The Old Testament Background for Paul's Use of 'Principalities and Powers,'" 44–45; See Michael S. Heiser, *Supernatural: What the Bible Teaches About the Unseen World - and Why It Matters* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham, 2015), 23; Heiser, *Demons*, 241–42.
16. See William F. Cook III and Chuck Lawless, *Spiritual Warfare in the Storyline of Scripture: A Biblical, Theological, and Practical Approach* (Nashville: B&H Academic, 2019), 19.
17. So, too, Arnold, 3 *Crucial Questions about Spiritual Warfare*, 39.
18. Payne is correct that spiritual warfare often includes multiple spheres (Karl I. Payne, *Spiritual Warfare: Christians, Demonization, and Deliverance* [Washington, D.C.: WND Books, 2011], 23–27). However, I disagree with the way he treats "the devil" as a supernatural influence that can provide one means of spiritual warfare (Jas 4:7–10; 1 Pet 5:6–7), alongside of temptation coming externally from the sociological "world" (Matt 6:24; Jas 4:4; 1 John 2:15–17) and internally from the physiological "flesh" (Rom 7:15–25; Gal 5:16–17, 19–23) (so Payne, *Spiritual Warfare*, xv; cf. the structure of chs. 4–6). He writes, "Demonic or supernatural warfare represents one third of the battle we face as soldiers of Christ, no more and no less" (Payne, *Spiritual Warfare*, 45). Similarly, Derek Prince presents the flesh and powers of darkness as distinct spheres of evil (Prince Derek, *They Shall Expel Demons: What You Need to Know about Demons—Your Invisible Enemies*, 7th ed. [Grand Rapids: Chosen Books, 1999], 98–102), though—based on Gal 5:19–21—he does recognize that the flesh practices witchcraft, which in turn opens one up to demonic forces (*They Shall Expel Demons*, 136–39). For others who understand the devil to work in concert with the flesh and the world, see C. Fred Dickason, *Demon Possession and the Christian: A New Perspective* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 1993), 61; Clinton E. Arnold, 3 *Crucial Questions about Spiritual Warfare* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1997), 35–37. In contrast, the "desires of the flesh" associated with humanity's sinful nature (Gal 5:16) are the same "desires of the flesh" awakened by the "world" (1 John 2:15) (contra Payne, *Spiritual Warfare*, 70), and the Bible suggests that both external and internal oppositions derive from the devil who is both the "ruler of this world" (John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11; 1 John 4:4) and the spirit at work in the sons of disobedience and who awakens the passions of the flesh and the desires of the body and the mind (Eph 2:2–3). The

- world and flesh are but agents through which the devil works to frustrate and tempt; all *spiritual warfare* is supernatural and spirit-driven, even when it comes by natural means (Eph 6:11–12).
19. In response to the question, “How do evil spirits affect us?,” Wimber and Springer state that Satan attacks through opposition, temptation, and demonization (John Wimber and Kevin Springer, *Power Healing* [San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1987], 106–10). These are generally akin to the three categories proposed here. Arnold proposes a similar “continuum of demonic influence”: (1) tempted; (2) regularly yielding to a demonic temptation; (3) “devoured; taken captive; taken as plunder”; (4) demonized (Arnold, *3 Crucial Questions about Spiritual Warfare*, 101). Dickason goes further, suggesting that the intensity of demonization depends on one of three factors: (1) how wicked the demon is within someone; (2) how many demons inhabit someone; and (3) the ranks of the demons within someone (Dickason, *Demon Possession and the Christian*, 44–45). Of these three, Scripture only identifies number two as potentially intensifying the demonic stronghold (Luke 11:26; see also Mark 1:24[?]; 5:9; Luke 8:2; but cf. Acts 19:15–16).
 20. In contrast to Arnold and Heiser, I do not think 2 Tim 2:25–26 is speaking about Christians (see Arnold, *3 Crucial Questions about Spiritual Warfare*, 94–95; Heiser, *Demons*, 255–56). Within the Pastorals, their need to gain “a knowledge of the truth” suggests that God has not yet saved them (cf. 1 Tim 2:4; Tit 1:1).
 21. For various interpretations of *stoicheia* (“elemental spirits”), see Heiser, *Demons*, 221–23; David A. deSilva, *The Letter to the Galatians*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2018), 348–53; Thomas R. Schreiner, *Galatians*, Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010), 267–69. While the term *stoicheia* includes a broad usage including physical elements, foundational principles, or spirit beings, because in both Col 2 and Gal 4 the *stoicheia* stand against Christ by inspiring false teaching, I agree with Arnold that both texts refer to “elemental spirits,” which are the same as “the rulers and authorities” that he mentions elsewhere (Col 2:15; cf. 1:16; Eph 6:12). See Clinton E. Arnold, “Returning to the Domain of the Powers: Stoicheia as Evil Spirits in Gal 4:3, 9,” *NovT* 38 (1996): 55–76; cf. Arnold, *3 Crucial Questions about Spiritual Warfare*, 95–97.
 22. Arnold links the rise of this perspective in the modern day to Merrill Unger’s claim that the believer “is not liable to demon inhabitation” (Merrill F. Unger, *Biblical Demonology: A Study of the Spiritual Forces Behind the Present World Unrest*, 2nd ed. (Wheaton, IL: Van Kampen, 1953), 100; cf. Arnold, *3 Crucial Questions about Spiritual Warfare*, 76). In two later works, Unger notes he changed his perspective: Merrill F. Unger, *Demons in the World Today: A Study of Occultism in the Light of God’s Word* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale, 1974); Merrill F. Unger, *What Demons Can Do to Saints* (Chicago: Moody, 1978). One of the most recent arguments for the view that Christians cannot be “possessed” or “indwelt” is John R. Gilhooly, “Question 13. Can Christians Be Demon-Possessed,” in *40 Questions about Angels, Demons, and Spiritual Warfare*, 40 Questions (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2018), 75–84.
 23. Though not using the term “demonization,” Saucy agrees that Christians can suffer from evil powers: “Both Scripture and experience show believers giving themselves to the influence and even servitude of sin (e.g., John 8:34; Rom. 6:12–13, 17) and evil powers (cf. Gal. 4:3, 8–9; 1 Tim. 3:7; poss. 2 Tim. 2:35–26” (Robert Saucy, “An Open but Cautious View,” in *Are Miraculous Gifts for Today?: Four Views, Counterpoints: Bible and Theology* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996], 135–36). For a survey of demonization within the early church and beyond, see Paul Thigpen, “Spiritual Warfare in the Early Church,” *Discipleship Journal* 14.3 (1994); Arnold, *3 Crucial Questions about Spiritual Warfare*, 107–12; Craig S. Keener, *Miracles: The Credibility of the New Testament Accounts*, 2 vols. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011), 769–87; Clint Tibbs, “Mediumistic Divine Possession among Early Christians: A Response to Craig S. Keener’s ‘Spirit Possession as a Cross-Cultural Experience,’” *BBR* 26 (2016): 173–94. See also Questions 21–24 in John R. Gilhooly, *40 Questions about Angels, Demons, and Spiritual Warfare*, 40 Questions (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2018), 123–39. For more on demonization in societies today, see Keener, *Miracles*, 788–856.
 24. Arnold notes, “The most natural way to interpret the use of *topos* in Ephesians 4:27 is the idea of inhabitable space” (Arnold, *3 Crucial Questions about Spiritual Warfare*, 88).
 25. On this point I agree with Arnold: “Demonic spirits cannot penetrate to the core of this person’s being and snatch away what belongs to God. A believer may yield to the evil impulse or to a demonic spirit, allowing it to assert a dominating influence over mind, will, emotions, and even the body. But the person’s new identity as a child of God cannot be erased or stolen. Nor do demonic spirits have the ability to evict the Holy Spirit of God” (Arnold, *3 Crucial Questions about Spiritual Warfare*, 81–88, quote from 85).
 26. The well-known Greek lexicon BDAG renders *daimonizomai* as “be possessed by a hostile spirit,” which most people commonly assume means the evil presence is indwelling a person. Both Clinton Arnold and Sam Storms equate *daimonizomai* with indwelling but both discourage the use of “possession” language, due to its link with the concept of ownership (Arnold, *3 Crucial Questions about Spiritual Warfare*, 78–81;

- Sam Storms, *Tough Topics: Biblical Answers to 25 Challenging Questions* [Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2013], 167; cf. Wimber and Springer, *Power Healing*, 109; Dickason, *Demon Possession and the Christian*, 38). Storms actually questions whether “Satan or a demon owns anything,” but Jesus spoke of his overcoming the devil’s kingdom as taking his possessions: “Or how can someone enter a strong man’s house and plunder his goods unless he first binds the strong man? Then indeed he may plunder his house” (Matt 12:29; cf. Mark 3:27). The KJV consistently rendered *daimonizomai* as “possessed” by demons, whereas the ESV uses both “oppressed” and “possessed” by demons, depending on the context. As noted above, some passages specifically refer to an internal demonic presence and accompanying torment, but other texts do not necessarily require that the demonic tormenter is actually inhabiting his target. Regardless of the unclean spirit’s location, demonization always includes a twisting of dispositions, desires, and/or physical-mental states. Karl Payne prefers to speak of three categories: oppression, possession, and demonization (Payne, *Spiritual Warfare*, 9, 92–96). However, I think that the Bible would include both the first two categories in the last, with demonization including a continuum of intensity and nature.
27. Only two texts do not use one or more of these accompanying verbs (Matt 4:24 and 15:22), but the parallel passages include them (Mark 1:32–34 and 7:24–30). Both Heiser (*Demons*, 253–56) and Arnold (*3 Crucial Questions about Spiritual Warfare*, 73–142, esp 93–97) affirm that though evil spiritual beings cannot own Christians they do nevertheless demonize Christians. Arnold differs from the position above in that he understands demonization to necessarily include inhabitation—something I believe can happen with Christians at low levels but is not necessarily the case in all instances of demonization. Heiser is unclear as to whether demonization necessarily includes inhabitation. In my mind, the *location* of demonic attack is less important than the reality of it.
 28. Wimber and Springer distinguish low-level demonization (influence, oppression, obsession, and subjection) from high-level demonization (demonic attack, assault, possession) (Wimber and Springer, *Power Healing*, 109–10). However, the biblical texts they equate with low-level demonization, I have linked with level 1 demonic influence, which includes both frustration and opposition from without and the twisting of thoughts and temptation from within. Whereas Wimber and Springer distinguish some external problems and temptations as related only to the world and flesh (Wimber and Springer, *Power Healing*, 107), I have argued that all problems and temptations in this cursed world likely have some link to the demonic (Luke 4:6; John 12:31; 2 Cor 4:4; 1 John 4:4; 5:19) but that only certain extreme cases would qualify for the language of demonization. The distinction between level 1 and level 2 demonic influence is a matter of degree.
 29. Likewise, R. T. France, following BDAG, understands *en pneumati* in Mark 1:23 to mean that the man is “under the special influence of the spirit” (R. T. France, *The Gospel of Mark*, New International Greek New Testament Commentary [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002], 103).
 30. For reflections on the differences with respect to symptoms, diagnoses, and treatment, see Millard J. Sall, “Demon Possession or Psychopathology: A Theological Relationship? A Clinical Differentiation,” *Journal of Psychology and Theology* 4.4 (1976): 286–90; T. Craig Isaacs, “The Possessive States Disorder: The Diagnosis of Demonic Possession,” *Pastoral Psychology* 35.4 (1987): 263–73.
 31. In all likelihood, the “testing of spirits” in 1 John 4:1–3 is *not* what Paul means by the gift of distinguishing spirits, for John is talking about something all Christians must do, assessing whether teachers confess that “Jesus Christ has come in the flesh.” In contrast, the gift of distinguishing spirits is “probably a supernaturally enabled sense or feeling concerning the nature and source of the spirit” (Sam Storms, *The Beginner’s Guide to Spiritual Gifts*, 2nd ed. (Ventura, CA: Regal, 2013), 131).
 32. Some who understand Jesus’s designation that the woman is a “daughter of Abraham” to refer to her proper spiritual standing are Robert H. Stein, *Luke*, NAC 24 (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1993), 374; Joel B. Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 525; James R. Edwards, *The Gospel According to Luke*, PNTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2015), 397.
 33. Heiser holds the “messenger of Satan” to be “supernatural being ... from Satan” (Heiser, *Demons*, 256). Others he cites holding this same position are David Abernathy, “Paul’s Thorn in the Flesh: A Messenger of Satan?” *Neotestamentica* 35.1–2 (2001): 69–79; Christopher R. A. Morray-Jones, “Paradise Revisited (2 Cor 12:1–12): The Jewish Mystical Background of Paul’s Apostolate: Part 1: The Jewish Sources,” *HTR* 86.2 (1993): 177–217; Morray-Jones, “Paradise Revisited (2 Cor 12:1–12): The Jewish Mystical Background of Paul’s Apostolate: Part 2: Paul’s Heavenly Ascent and Its Significance,” *HTR* 86.3 (1993): 265–92. Likewise, Arnold understands the “thorn” in Paul’s flesh to refer to physical suffering brought about by one of Satan’s messengers (Arnold, *3 Crucial Questions about Spiritual Warfare*, 100). The OT associates “thorns” with external enemy false teaching and persecution that tempts and inflicts (Num 33:55; Josh 23:13; Judg 2:3).
 34. Luke tells of how at Pentecost the sound of the Spirit’s working “filled the entire house” of the disciples

- (Acts 2:2) and how the disciples, after standing up for Christ, were “filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit” (Acts 13:52).
35. Ajith Fernando writes, “There is nothing to say that Annanias and Sapphira were not believers.... The term *demonization* is gaining popularity today, referring to Satan’s influence on both believers and unbelievers. Demonization is what happened when ‘Satan entered Judas’ prior to his betrayal of Jesus (Luke 22:3). The word also leaves room for varying degrees of satanic influence on different people... [D]emonization denotes the occurrence in the lives of Christians when Satan gets them so obsessed with an idea or course of action that they get carried away and are blinded to the consequences. That seems to be happening here [i.e. in the case of Annanias and Sapphira]” (Ajith Fernando, *Acts*, NIVAC [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1998], 199). Cf. Peter H. Davids, “A Biblical View of the Fruits of Sin,” in *The Kingdom and the Power: Are Healing and Spiritual Gifts Used by Jesus and the Early Church Meant for the Church Today?*, ed. Kevin Springer and Gary S. Greig (Ventura, CA: Regal, 1993), 118–20; Arnold, *3 Crucial Questions about Spiritual Warfare*, 97–98.
 36. Arnold agrees that Acts 19 likely speaks of Paul delivering Christians from demonization. See *3 Crucial Questions about Spiritual Warfare*, 91–92.
 37. The Greek *topos* means “place” but can signify “possibility, opportunity, or chance,” as in Rom 12:19, where we read, “Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it [= *place, opportunity*] to the wrath of God” (Bauer et al., *BDAG*, 1012; s.v. τόπος; cf. Acts 25:16; Rom 12:19; 15:23). I agree with Arnold that Eph 4:27 likely refers to actual turf of our lives that we give over to the devil and from which he exerts his evil influence (Arnold, *3 Crucial Questions about Spiritual Warfare*, 86–89). My research assistant, Brian Verrett, identified Gen 4:7 as a possible backdrop to both Eph 4:27 and Rom 6:12 and drew my attention to an interpretive tradition that understands God’s warning to Cain to be that he must make sure that a demon known for hanging about the doorsteps of houses does not reign over him as a king (see Bill T. Arnold, *Genesis*, New Cambridge Bible Commentary [New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009], 79; John Goldingay, *Genesis*, Baker Commentary on the Old Testament: Pentateuch [Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2020], 90). Another potential parallel is Exod 12:23, where Yahweh’s “destroyer” will enter homes to kill.
 38. J. Armitage Robinson, *St. Paul’s Epistle to the Ephesians: A Revised Text and Translation with Exposition and Notes*, 2nd ed. (London: Macmillan, 1907), 112; cf. Peter T. O’Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 341.
 39. Payne, *Spiritual Warfare*, 99.
 40. Scott J. Hafemann, *2 Corinthians*, NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000), 428.
 41. Bethlehem’s EAF §8.1 declares, “We believe that the Holy Spirit has always been at work in the world, sharing in the work of creation, awakening faith in the remnant of God’s people, performing signs and wonders, giving triumphs in battle, empowering the preaching of the prophets and inspiring the writing of Scripture. Yet, when Christ had made atonement for sin, and ascended to the right hand of the Father, He inaugurated a new era of the Spirit by pouring out the promise of the Father on His Church.”
 42. Arnold helpfully notes that, within the context of 1 Cor 10:3–4, “demolishing strongholds refers to changing wrong ideas about Christ in the minds of believers who have been influenced by demonically inspired teaching.” Arnold, *3 Crucial Questions about Spiritual Warfare*, 55.
 43. Arnold, *3 Crucial Questions about Spiritual Warfare*, 103–06.
 44. In Luke 10:19 we read that Christ gave his followers “authority to tread on serpents and scorpions.” Storms rightly notes that the mention of “serpents and scorpions” here most likely points to demonic influences: “The references [to serpents and scorpions] are not to be taken literally but are a vivid and symbolic way of describing demonic beings. Serpents and scorpions were familiar sources of evil and pain in Palestinian life and frequently symbolized all kinds of adversity and affliction (see Numbers 21:6–9; Deuteronomy 8:15; Psalms 58:4; 140:3). The scorpion was also a means of divine chastisement in 1 Kings 12:11, 14 (see also Luke 11:11–12). And we are all familiar with Satan’s identification with the serpent (Genesis 3; 2 Corinthians 11; Revelation 12 and 20). Satan’s dominion is that of snakes and scorpions (see especially Psalm 91:12–13).” Sam Storms, *Practicing the Power: Welcoming the Gifts of the Holy Spirit in Your Life* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2017), 154–55. See also C. Samuel Storms, “A Third Wave Response to Douglas A. Oss,” in *Are Miraculous Gifts for Today?: Four Views, Counterpoints: Bible and Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 306–8. Both Marshall and Stein see Luke 10:17–20 foreshadowing the future mission of the church (I. Howard Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, NIGTC [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978], 413; Stein, *Luke*, 310).
 45. Bethlehem’s EAF §10.6 states, “We believe that all who are justified will win this fight. They will persevere in faith and never surrender to the enemy of their souls. This perseverance is the promise of the New Covenant, obtained by the blood of Christ, and worked in us by God Himself, yet not so as to diminish,

- but only to empower and encourage, our vigilance; that so we may say in the end, I have fought the good fight, but it was not I, but the grace of God which was with me.”
46. For a discussion regarding the resources the Christian needs to successfully practice spiritual warfare based in large measure on Eph 6:10–18 see Arnold, 3 *Crucial Questions about Spiritual Warfare*, 39–49.
 47. The ESV reads, “Deliver us from evil,” but the form the Greek text includes the definite article before “evil” (= *tou ponērou*), suggesting to many that Jesus is associating “evil” with a particular person (= “the evil one,” so ESV footnote; cf. NKJV, NRSV, NETB, NIV, CSB).
 48. Storms, *Practicing the Power*, 157–58.
 49. Storms, *Practicing the Power*, 158. Bethlehem’s EAF §11.1 affirms, “We believe that faith is awakened and sustained by God’s Spirit through His Word and prayer. The good fight of faith is fought mainly by meditating on the Scriptures and praying that God would apply them to our souls.” We then read in EAF §11.2, “We believe that the promises of God recorded in the Scriptures are suited to save us from the deception of sin by displaying for us, and holding out to us, superior pleasures in the protection, provision, and presence of God. Therefore, reading, understanding, pondering, memorizing, and savoring the promises of all that God will be for us in Jesus are primary means of the Holy Spirit to break the power of sin’s deceitful promises in our lives. Therefore it is needful that we give ourselves to such meditation day and night.” Finally, EAF §11.4 states, “We believe that prayer is the indispensable handmaid of meditation, as we cry out to God for the inclination to turn from the world the Word, and for the spiritual ability to see the glory of God in His testimonies, and for a soul-satisfying sight of the love of God, and for strength in the inner man to do the will of God. By prayer God sanctifies His people, sends gospel laborers into the world, and causes the Word of God to spread and triumph over Satan and unbelief.”
 50. Payne, *Spiritual Warfare*, 88–89.
 51. While the devil can perform counterfeit miracles under the sovereign guidance of Yahweh (Deut 13:1–3), Scripture asserts that God’s power is shown supreme every time a person is delivered from demonic forces. Many ancient sources identify exorcisms or deliverances as operative in their day. In the late first century AD, for example, Jewish historian Josephus testifies to exorcisms occurring in his day (Josephus, *JW*. 7.185 [6.3]), and he claims such were operative all the way back to the days of Solomon (*Ant*. 8.45–8 [2.5]; cf. Tob 6:16–17; 8:2–3; Justin Martyr *Dial*. 85). We must read such realities either as counterfeits or as merciful deliverances wrought by God.
 52. Arnold rightly notes: “We are therefore not called to bind the strong man ourselves; this has already been done by Christ” (Arnold, 3 *Crucial Questions about Spiritual Warfare*, 106.).
 53. See esp. C. Peter Wagner, *Confronting the Powers: How the New Testament Church Experienced the Power of Strategic-Level Spiritual Warfare*, The Prayer Warrior Series (Ventura, CA: Regal, 1996); C. Peter Wagner, “The Strategic-Level Deliverance Model,” in *Understanding Spiritual Warfare: Four Views*, ed. James K. Beilby and Paul Rhodes Eddy (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2012), 173–98.
 54. For an extended overview and evaluation of this thinking that affirms my perspective, see Arnold, 3 *Crucial Questions about Spiritual Warfare*, 143–99; cf. Heiser, *Demons*, 256–62; John R. Gilhooly, “Question 12. Are There Territorial Spirits?,” in *40 Questions about Angels, Demons, and Spiritual Warfare*, 40 Questions (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2018), 75–79.
 55. I agree with David Powlison that most of a Christian’s spiritual warfare happens in the daily pursuit of holiness (flesh vs. spirit) and not in the realm of the fantastic or extraordinary, and I also agree that many contemporary deliverance ministries follow misguided, unbiblical practices (see David Powlison, *Power Encounters: Reclaiming Spiritual Warfare* [Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1995]; David Powlison, “The Classical Model,” in *Understanding Spiritual Warfare: Four Views*, ed. James K. Beilby and Paul Rhodes Eddy [Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2012], 89–111). With respect to the latter, Arnold rightly identifies four ways that contemporary deliverance ministries often execute their service in ways parallel to ancient magical practices: (1) an emphasis on formulaic prayers; (2) an overemphasis on “what works”; (3) an emphasis on immediate curses; (4) an emphasis on angels and invoking angels (Arnold, 3 *Crucial Questions about Spiritual Warfare*, 132–33). Nevertheless, I think Powlison dismisses too quickly the normative aspects of the NT’s own witness to how Jesus and the early church confronted the demonic realm. For more on this view, see Kevin Springer and Gary S. Greig, eds., *The Kingdom and the Power: Are Healing and Spiritual Gifts Used by Jesus and the Early Church Meant for the Church Today?* (Ventura, CA: Regal, 1993).
 56. Arnold, 3 *Crucial Questions about Spiritual Warfare*, 115–29. Elsewhere, following the pattern in Eph 6:10–20, Arnold encourages believers to resist (using defensive weapons like the belt of truth and breastplate of righteousness and shield of faith) and proclaim (using offensive weapons like the sword of the Spirit [God’s Word] and prayer) (Clinton E. Arnold, *Powers of Darkness: Principalities and Powers in Paul’s Letters*

- [Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1992], 153–59; Clinton E. Arnold, *Ephesians*, ECNT [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010], 454–55).
57. The pattern evident above is often termed a “power encounter,” which Storms has summarized as follows: (1) *Expose*, discerning (1 Cor 12:10) and documenting that demonic activity is present; (2) *Engage*, identifying the name, function, and point or ground of entry of any demonic force(s); (3) *Expel*, casting out/away the demon(s) in the name and authority of Jesus (Storms, *Practicing the Power*, 166). For a full description of Storm’s approach to deliverance, see Storms, *Practicing the Power*, 168–75. See also the overviews of engaging in prayer for the demonized in Wimber and Springer, *Power Healing*, 230–35 and of confronting demons in Payne, *Spiritual Warfare*, 127–43.
 58. Paralleling such resistance to a child’s opposition to a parent’s command, Storms says that “our approach should not be, ‘Speak the word of command in Jesus’ name, and it is done,’ but ‘speak the word of command in Jesus name UNTIL it is done’” (Storms, *Practicing the Power*, 163).
 59. For the importance of Eph 6:10–20 in the entire letter of Ephesians, see, e.g., Peter T. O’Brien, *The Letter to Ephesians*, NNTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 456–60; Andrew T. Lincoln, *Ephesians*, Word 42 (Nashville: Nelson, 1990), 432–33, 438–41; Joshua M. Greever, “The Armor of God, the Gospel of Christ, and Standing Firm against the ‘Powers’ (Ephesians 6:10–20),” *JBTS* 5.1 (2020): 73–78. For “mystery” in Ephesians, see G. K. Beale and Benjamin L. Gladd, *Hidden But Now Revealed: A Biblical Theology of Mystery* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2014), 147–97.
 60. In Isa 11:5, the Spirit-empowered king wears righteousness as “the belt of his waist” and faithfulness as “the belt of his loins.” In 49:2, the servant-person’s mouth is “like a sharp sword” and his life like an “arrow.” In 52:10 and 59:16 the one bringing salvation is Yahweh’s “arm,” which 53:1–2 identifies as the messianic servant-person: “He put on righteousness as a breastplate, and a helmet of salvation in his head; he put on garments of vengeance for clothing, and wrapped himself in zeal as a cloak” (59:17). Alec Motyer helpfully identifies that Isaiah built his book around three messianic portraits: the King (chs. 1–39[37]), the Servant (chs. 40[38]–55), and the Anointed Conqueror (chs. 56–66), whose main messianic passages as follows: (1) the King, 7:10–15; 9:1–7; 11:1–16; 14:28–32; 24:21–23; 32:1–8; 33:17–24; (2) the Servant, 42:1–4; 49:1–6; 50:4–9; 52:13–53:12; (3) the Anointed Conqueror, 59:21; 61:1–3; 61:10–62:7; 63:1–6 (Alec Motyer, *The Prophecy of Isaiah: An Introduction and Commentary* [Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993], 13–16).
 61. See T. Moritz, *A Profound Mystery: The Use of the Old Testament in Ephesians*, SNT 85 (Leiden: Brill, 1996), 187–95; T. Neufeld, “Put on the Armour of God’: *The Divine Warrior from Isaiah in Ephesians*, JSNTSup 140 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1997); R. Cozart, “*The Present Triumph: An Investigation into the Significance of a New Exodus of Israel in the Letter to the Ephesians* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2013), esp. 235–49; Mark D. Owens, “Spiritual Warfare and the Church’s Mission according to Ephesians 6:10–14,” *TynBul* 67.1 (2016): 87–10; Greever, “The Armor of God, the Gospel of Christ, and Standing Firm against the ‘Powers’ (Ephesians 6:10–20),” 84–88.
 62. See Owens, “Spiritual Warfare and the Church’s Mission according to Ephesians 6:10–14,” 87.
 63. Owens, “Spiritual Warfare and the Church’s Mission according to Ephesians 6:10–14,” 99.
 64. All believers experience levels of demonic oppression or torment, whether due to special attacks (Luke 22:31; Eph 6:13; 2 Cor 12:7), to intentionally inviting the demonic presence (Lev 19:31; Deut 18:10–11), to unintentionally inviting the demonic presence (Eph 4:27; 1 Tim 4:1–2; Jas 3:14–15), or through residual influence from the past (Exod 20:5; 1 Kgs 15:3; Mark 9:21; John 9:2). Furthermore, in this life, all those in Christ at times fail to resist the devil’s lies and schemes. Whether by giving in to anxiety, nurturing fear, having empty devotional times, withdrawing from biblical community, sustaining anger or bitterness, or engaging in other sins, we open our lives up to the devil’s work (Eph 4:27), forgetting that the temple of God and idolatry should not mix (2 Cor 6:14–16). In turn, demonic forces are freed to stir up unhealthy passions in the flesh and to move Christians to live false identities that resemble their old man (see 1 Cor 6:9–11; Eph 2:1–3). Thus, whether due to unintentional or intentional activity, we as believers must be awake and sober, standing firm in the armor of God and resisting the devil, trusting fully in Christ’s power and faithfulness (Eph 6:13–17; 1 Thess 5:6, 8). Owens, “Spiritual Warfare and the Church’s Mission according to Ephesians 6:10–14,” 102.
 65. Bethlehem’s EAF §10.5 states, “We believe that the sanctification, which comes by the Spirit through faith, is imperfect and incomplete in this life. Although slavery to sin is broken, and sinful desires are progressively weakened by the power of superior satisfaction in the glory of Christ, yet there remain remnants of corruption in every heart that give rise to irreconcilable war, and call for vigilance in the lifelong fight of faith.”