

Ezekiel Project 16

War: God's Saints

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Bible Text: Ezekiel 38-39

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The Ezekiel Project

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Welcome to the Ezekiel Project.

Today's reading is titled: "War: God's Saints"

This is chapter 16 from the book *The Wedding of Purity and Power*.

"And the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, Son of man, set thy face against Gog. And thus saith the Lord God, behold, I am against thee O Gog."

Ezekiel 38:2-3

Christians are in the midst of a conflict of epic proportions. The battle for the mind and soul of humanity is raging. Our enemy is none other than Satan, the god of this world. Satan is the enemy of Almighty God and the great deceiver of humanity. Satan is always ready to wage war against God's elect. Satan has a vast army of well recruited demons and human allies. Satan's army is incessantly looking to attack the unfortified places in our lives.

The events of human history verify these statements over and over again. Fortunately, for the Church of the living Christ, God knows our enemy better than we do. Our victory is assured because of the cross of Jesus Christ. The skirmishes may go to old slew foot, but the battle is ours. Christ is victor. Therefore, every Christian can be victorious in Christ.

Consider the true impact of this concept as the Apostle Paul teaches. "And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it," (Colossians 2:15).

Satan is a forever defeated foe. Yet why do Christians question and struggle in their victory? This is where an examination of Ezekiel 38-39 can help us by moving us beyond in understanding of our enemy's strategies and tactics. God intends so much more for us. God desires that we have victory in the land of abundance. God has already made provision for Christians to be "more than conquerors through Christ who loved us and gave His life for us," (Romans 8:37).

Nevertheless, in order to win the war we must go beyond just knowing the enemy's strategies and tactics. In order to win the war we must put on our own personal battle armor and learn God's plan for counterattack. As spiritual warriors we must be a well-trained and armed battalion (Ephesians 6:10-18). In order to do that, let us again learn from Ezekiel.

We must know that God partners with us.

In order to win this war we must know that God partners with us. God engages His power in the battle as we engage ourselves to fight the battle. Notice the text:

“And the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, Son of man, set thy face against Gog... And... Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I am against thee, O Gog.”

Ezekiel 38:2-3

Gone are the days when Christians could think that God makes war against the enemy without us being involved in the battle. To our detriment in the past many in the Church believed that God was a sort of spiritual hit man. The spiritual hit man was hired by paying the tithe and called into service by our many words. All the while we lounged around the lobby and the Chapel of Self sipping coffee and making small talk.

God is not a hireling that will bend to our commands, nor will He be passive to our needs. God will enter into the war with us, partnering with us in the victory that has been purchased for the people of covenant through the blood of Jesus Christ.

It is vitally important that we learn, as Ezekiel did, to set our face against the enemy, in order to enlist God's presence at the battle scene.

The Hebrew word for “set” is *suwm* which means to set something in its place; to appoint to a position; to establish a new position; to assign covenant responsibility to someone; to set in order to bring about a change; and to set aside for a special purpose.

The power and responsibility of **שָׁמַר** should cause the Church to stop passively sitting and get out of the pew and down on our knees aggressively, to set our face against the enemy. **שָׁמַר** teaches that we have been positioned in Christ, and established as a new creature in Christ. In the process, we are given covenant responsibility with the special purpose of bringing about a change in these perilous times.

It is the responsibility of the Church to stand in the gap and to prophesy the power of the resurrection into the lives of desperate people. The unwallled areas of our lives have been left unfortified far too long. **שָׁמַר** indicates that we are to take our positions of authority as prayer warriors in Jesus' name.

We are to exercise our covenant privileges, to bring about the prophesied defeat of the god of this world. To effect change in the natural realm we must prayerfully affect change in the spiritual realm. This Jesus taught when He said, “Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven,” (Matthew 18:18).

Upon his resurrection Lazarus was still bound in death’s grave clothes and needed to be loosed and let go. The Spirit of Christ still says to the Church, “loose and let go...those suffering around your church doors, those wounded by years of mistreatment and those bound in the grave clothes that the world has put on them.” All expressions of bondage and captivity must come off in Jesus’ name.

This is why Christians are instructed that “unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ. Wherefore He saith, “When he ascended up on high He led captivity and gave gifts unto men,” (Ephesians 4:8).

Those held captive by Satan, sin and society are to be set free in Jesus’ name. They are to be brought into the captivity of God’s redeeming love by the freeing power of the Holy Spirit. Let the Spirit-filled believer prophesy, “Loose them and let them go in Jesus’ name.”

In order to set the captive free the Church must pray the complement to the loose them and let them go, prophesy. To be a complete loosing and binding church the church must also exercise authority and bind the evil one. In regard to this Jesus taught that “no man can enter into a strong man’s house and spoil is good except he will first bind the strong man and then he will spoil his house,” (Mark 3:27).

The Greek word for “bind” is *δεο*, which literally means to fasten with chains. This we see illustrated in John’s revelation when Satan was bound and cast into the bottomless pit for 1000 years (Revelation 20:1-3).

Metaphorically, *δεο* means to put under the obligation of the law. The Church exercises binding authority when the Word of God is spoken with the anointing of the Holy Spirit. This imagery was exhibited by the Enthroned Christ who was seated in the heavens for the Scripture reads, “And out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword,” (Revelation 1:16).

When the living Christ speaks the Word of God, the two-edged sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God, is unleashed to cut and divide (Hebrews 4:12).

This act defeats the enemy and allows for his binding to take place.

Ezekiel touched on this proclamation by saying, “And I will call for a sword against him throughout all my mountains,” (Ezekiel 38:21).

When a believer is armed with the Word of God and accompanied by the anointing of the Holy Spirit, the spoken Word becomes the living Word. This exercise of faith calls upon the manifested power of God to bring Satan under subjection to God's Word. Satan and his demons must submit themselves to the authority of the Word of God.

We have to set our faces, our wills, against the destroyers of souls. The Church needs to regain the attitude of being seated in heavenly places in Christ Jesus (Ephesians 2:6). To be seated in heavenly places in Christ is to be seated in a position of authority. We are in Christ at the right hand of the majesty on high and that is a position of authority (Hebrews 1:3).

To the resurrected and glorified Christ all authority has been given in heaven and on earth (Matthew 28:18). By utilizing our being seated in heavenly places in Christ Jesus we have also been given authority to bind the enemy and loose his captives.

There is a renewed breath of the Spirit of God inspiring Christians to again take up their prayer mantle and set their face against Gog. The intensity of the battle demands that we set our faces in prayer and intercession crying out prophecies against the prince of darkness. Satan is a defeated foe. Prophecies simply remind him that he is already under subjection to the Word of God. Satan is always obligated to submit to the prophesied living Word of God.

What a victorious day it will be when believers learn how to properly use the Word of God in order to secure their victory. By setting our face against Satan he will come under the authority of the Word of God, be bound in chains and tossed, eventually, into the lake of fire. How glorious it is to see that those who were once held in bondage by the chains of this world set free in Jesus' name and held captive in the loving arms of a covenant keeping God.

We must know that God carries the load.

Second, let us recognize that by taking the initiative to partner with God, to battle against Satan, God will carry the majority of the responsibility and work load to defeat the evil one.

When we set our face against the enemy, God enters into partnership with us providing a supernatural power to defeat Satanic opposition.

The Apostle Paul recognized this as an aspect of his statement, "And he said unto me, 'My grace is sufficient for thee for My grace is made perfect in weakness.' Most gladly, therefore, will I rather glory in my infirmities that the power of Christ may rest upon me," (2 Corinthians 12:9).

In this text the apostle is teaching that our strength is fulfilled when we acknowledge our weakness, giving Christ the opportunity work in us and through us. In regard to the

spiritual warfare application we must realize that we have no power or ability within ourselves to wage spiritual warfare. We must recognize our weakness and call upon the name of the Lord. When we acknowledge this lack of power—call upon the name of the Lord and set our face against evil—God will enter the battle with us.

It does appear that the way to strength is weakness. The way to victory is surrender to God. In order to surrender we must take on the mantle of humility.

Pride would keep us from calling upon God, from entering into partnership with Him. Pride would say, “I can do it on my own.” Pride would say that it is better to hid our weaknesses, never admitting to anything less than our being all that. This is why the Scripture says pride goes before a fall, for when we fail to admit that there is a need for victory over an unwalled place, we will be defeated at that very place.

The apostle’s position is contrary to the pride that allows Satan to attack the unwalled places. This pride, coupled with complacency leads to the false security of the unwalled places. When we make a humble and honest confession of our unwalled places, they are turned over to Christ. In this approach Christ is given opportunity to manifest His strength on our behalf.

Listen to the Apostle Peter explain this principle:

“Likewise ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another and be clothed with humility for God resists the proud and gives grace to the humble. Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God that He may exalt you in due time.”

1 Peter 5:5-6

Partnership with God to make war against Satan is initiated when Christians set their face. The setting of our face is not just against the works of the devil, but against the devil himself. As with the shepherd boy David standing in front of the giant Goliath the Word against Satan is, “All this assembly shall know that the Lord saves not with sword and spear, for the battle is the Lord’s and He will give you into our hands,” (1 Samuel 17: 47).

Goliath can be viewed as a type of Satan, large and imposing, a seemingly undefeatable opponent who constantly mocks God.

When the shepherd boy took the initiative to face the giant, God partnered with David and the giant fell. The same will be true of us when we partner with God. Once partnership has been initiated by setting our face against the enemy, God promises to carry the burden of the victory.

In these chapters God offers a response to Satan’s five “I will” statements. God’s I will statements are a means to the defeat of the enemy. The phrase I will is both an identity statement and present tense statement. As an identity statement Almighty God knows

who He is, of what He is and where He is at. Almighty God is the sovereign creator of all and a consuming fire of holiness and love. Almighty God is the transcendent holy God who is also a covenant keeping God. Almighty God is where His creation needs Him to be for the whole earth is full of His glory.

As a present tense statement, Almighty God is the God of the living, active now on behalf of His people, and working to perfect His will of saving and sanctifying souls. As the present tense God, His ways and works are powerful right now. Past works provide testimonies, inspiring an increase in faith. Promised future works provide the hope to exercise even greater faith. It is this faith that exercises belief in the Word of God.

When we exercise faith in the completed work of the cross we enter into Jesus' victory that continues to defeat the world, the devil and the flesh. A survey of the Almighty's "I will" statements from Ezekiel 38-39 demonstrates how our present tense God is going to transform our face setting initiative into complete and total victory.

The results of God's "I will" statements against Satan:

*God will call the sword of the Spirit against Satan. (38:21)

*God will judge Satan by the blood of the cross. (38:22a)

*God will rain judgment fire upon Satan. (38:22b)

*God will rebuke Satan's assaults upon believers. (39:2)

*God will stop Satan's attacks upon the believer. (39:3)

*God will defeat Satan in an all consuming judgment. (39:4)

*God will send fire upon Satan in an eternal judgment. (39:6)

*God will defeat Satan once and forever. (39:11)

The Apostle John explains that the Church overcame the devil by the means of "the blood of the Lamb and by the Word of their testimony," (Revelation 12:11).

The judgment of Satan took place on the cross. When Jesus declared, "It is finished," an eternal declaration of victory was proclaimed (John 19:30).

Let the Church of the living Christ never, never, never forget that Jesus paid the price for our victory over sin, death and the grave.

*On the cross Satan was a forever defeated foe in that "it is finished."
(John 19:30 and Colossians 2:15)

*On the cross sickness was defeated as “by His stripes we are healed.”
(Isaiah 53:3 and 1 Peter 2:24)

*On the cross self-sovereignty lost its position as our “old man was crucified.”
(Romans 6:6)

*On the cross sin was forgiven for we are “cleansed of all unrighteousness.”
(1 John 5:17)

As the Lamb of God poured out His precious blood, all provision was complete defeating every Satanic expression that opposes the will of God. Again we are reminded:

“And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh hath He quickened together with Him having forgiven you all trespasses blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us which was contrary to us and took it out of the way nailing it to His cross. And having spoiled principalities and powers He made a show of them openly triumphing over them in it.”

(Colossians 2:13-15)

The results of God’s “I will” statements upon the believer are:

*God will restore His people to their land of promise. (Ezekiel 39:25)

*God will pour out His Holy Spirit upon His people. (Ezekiel 39:29)

By leading captivity, captive Jesus Christ restores believers to the Father’s intended glory. God’s purpose for both individual Christians and the Church is their occupation of the land of promise. For the followers of Jesus Christ the land of promise is the Spirit-filled life. The Spirit-filled life avails to the believer the gifts of the Spirit (1 Corinthians 12) and the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-24).

In the Spirit-filled life love, graciousness and mercy are ever flowing as the promises of a life in a spiritual land of milk and honey are fulfilled.

The Spirit filled-life provides a beautiful balance. This occurs when the purging and empowering fire of God gives the believer supernatural provision to live victoriously over the world, the devil and the flesh.

By means of the Holy Spirit, the Spirit-filled believer is empowered to meet both the needs of those who are in the world and the needs of those within the Church. By means of the Holy Spirit the believer is empowered to experience a true rest of faith (Hebrews 4).

The Holy Spirit's infilling provides the believer with an inner fortitude to live a life of sanctification and holiness. Only the Spirit-filled believer has the ability to live within the covenant boundaries as outlined in Deuteronomy 28 and the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-8).

The Spirit-filled life is the possession of the land of covenant that God promised Abraham's seed. The infilling of the Holy Spirit provides the believer with the means to enter into and occupy the Promised Land. God does not provide His Holy Spirit for temporary vacations in the land of promise, only for the believer to return to a mundane religious existence.

The infilling of the Holy Spirit provides the believer with the purity and the power that are necessary to occupy the Promised Land in victory. The land flowing with the milk and honey of the Holy Spirit satisfies all desires, conquers all giant, and establishes the believer's place of rest in true sanctification and security.

Is it any wonder God promises to pour His Holy Spirit upon the nation, His people. For by grace they return to the land and by grace they will stay in the land.

The results of God's "I will" statements upon Himself:

*God will magnify His reputation. (38:23)

*God will separate His name as holy. (39:7)

*God will glorify Himself among the heathen. (39:21)

When the Spirit-filled follower of Jesus Christ has victory, God is made larger than life for He is larger than life. When the Spirit-filled believer lives in the beauty of holiness God is made holy for He is holy. When the Spirit-filled believer conquers the world, the devil and the flesh God is glorified for His glory has filled the earth.

The Apostle Paul spoke of the Church as a world defying, devil defeating, and flesh denying Church when he wrote:

“Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation or distress or persecution or famine or nakedness or peril or sword? As it is written, for thy sake we are killed all the day long. We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death nor life nor angels nor principalities nor powers nor things present nor things to come nor height nor depth nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

Romans 8:35-39

This great victory that the apostle writes of is only gained by the follower of Jesus Christ. Christ told Peter, “Upon this rock (the truth that he was the Christ, the Son of God) I will build My Church and the gates of hell, Satan’s realm, shall not prevail against it,” (Matthew 16:18).

Jesus spoke further of this victory saying, “But when a stronger than he shall come upon him and overcome him, He (Jesus) takes from him all his armor wherein he trusted and divided his spoils,” (Luke 11:22).

Again Jesus taught the thief Satan “comes not but for to steal and to kill and destroy. I am come that they might have life and that they might have it more abundantly,” (John 10:10).

It is not in the waging of the spiritual war alone that God is glorified. It is in the winning of the spiritual war that God is glorified. When the Church stands strong in battle against the devil, when the Church stands unwaveringly against the world, and even when the Church stands against its own bent toward self-gratification, then the Lord is glorified.

The Church was given the Holy Spirit so that it could be a world defying, devil defeating and flesh denying presence in the world. When the Church enjoys the abundant and victorious life for which Christ gave His life, the heathen will take notice. The world will take notice. The unbeliever will take notice. The backslider will take notice. The idolater will take notice. The Atheist will take notice. The secularist will take notice. The apostate will take notice. The pagan will take notice. The new age advocate will notice. The occultist will take notice. The devil worshipper will take notice.

When the Church enters into spiritual warfare according to God’s design—exemplifies a triumphant spirit—and exercises authority over the realm of darkness, then God will be glorified and given honor in all the earth.