How to use God's power to take, and maintain, the initiative in the war against evil

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Isaiah 47:10: “You have trusted in your wickedness; you have said, ‘No one sees me.’” This is a word addressed to Babylon, that in the context constantly used witchcraft. The translation of the Jewish Publication Society has, ‘you have been secure’. I think that in our country and world today many servants of Satan, because they have never seen a Christian who knew how to use God’s power (see Eph. 3:20 below), have come to the conclusion that Satan's power is greater than the power of God, at least for practical purposes in this world. They feel safe and secure.

Ephesians 3:20-21: “Now to Him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to the power that is working in us,[1] 21 to Him be the glory in the Church in Christ Jesus, to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.”[2]

Ephesians 1:19 speaks of “the exceeding greatness of His power **into** us who are believing”—note that the verb is in the present tense; having believed yesterday won’t hack it, we must believe today. This tremendous power that God pours into us, as we believe, exceeds our powers of imagination. Well now, my personal horizon is limited and defined by my ability to imagine. Anything that I can’t imagine lies outside my horizon, and so obviously I won’t ask for it. I sadly confess that I have not yet arrived at a spiritual level where I can unleash this power—I have yet to make the truth in this verse work for me. Worse, much worse, during the 90 years of my life, I have never seen anyone who wielded this power.[3] No wonder Satan's servants feel secure—that is a calamity the size of the world, worse than a pandemic!![4]

Ephesians 1:19-20: “and what the exceeding greatness of His power into us who are believing, according to the demonstration of the extent of His might which He exercised in the Christ when He raised Him from among the dead and seated Him at His right, in the heavenly realms, far above every ruler and authority and

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[1] The whole point of the exercise (verse 21) is for God to get glory [not for me to have a good time, although if I ever get there I will certainly have a great good time!], and to the extent that we do <u>not</u> put His power in us to work we are depriving Him of glory that He could and should have.

[2] The glory that God gets from the Church will go on forever.

[3] But I understand that the truth affirmed here is literal, and I only hope that others will get there before I do (so I can learn from them), if I keep on delaying.

[4] And there is more: I don't know anyone in Brazil, where I live, who has the gift of discerning spirits (or at least who makes use of the gift). Since there are humanoids (offspring of demon with woman) and 'robots' (a person who voluntarily surrenders himself to the total control of a demon), operating everywhere, we desperately need this gift! Is the Holy Spirit not giving it to anyone? Or could it be that no church is giving space for the exercise of this gift? (In this case, the person with the gift remains silent, inert.) And why denounce an evil spirit if no one in the church knows what to do about it?

power and dominion—even every name that can be named, not only in this age but also in the next."

It is generally understood that the reference is to the angelic hierarchy. The two thirds that remained faithful to God were never a problem, so presumably the special point is that Christ defeated Satan, with his one third (Revelation 12:3-4), and is now (as the God/man, the second Adam) seated 'far above' that enemy. Now consider Ephesians 2:5-6.

Ephesians 2:5-6: "even when we were dead in our transgressions—made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved) and raised us up together and seated us together in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus."

This is tremendous! Here we have our authority. Christ is now seated at the Father's right, "far above" (1:21) the enemy and his hosts. This verse affirms that we are there too! So in Christ we also are far above the enemy and his hosts. We should be consciously operating on that basis, but since few churches teach this, most Christians live in spiritual defeat. Since they don't know anything else, they think that is the normal Christian life. How sad!

But there is a 'condition'! Now consider John 5:19-20: "Then Jesus answered and said to them: 'Most assuredly I say to you, the Son is not able to do anything from Himself, except something He sees the Father doing; because whatever things <u>He</u> does, precisely these the Son also does.[1] For the Father loves[2] the Son and shows Him everything that He Himself is doing.'"

The Son "<u>could not</u>" do what the Father was not doing. Well now, if Jesus couldn't, how much less can we! What this saying by the Sovereign teaches me is that handling God's power in an aggressive way, as offense, must be in accord with the Father's will, something that He 'is doing'. It follows that before I act, I need to spend time in the Father's presence to hear from Him what He is doing. Jesus was always in contact with the Father, but I am not, at least not in the same sense.

I think it is worth noting that God is prepared to use just one person who is available to Him. God used Moses, Joshua, Elijah, Elisha and Paul: Acts 13:9 says that Paul was "filled with Holy Spirit", so blinding Elymas was something God wanted to do. Ezekiel 22:30 says that God looked for just one man to stand in the

[1] For a long time, I only looked at the 'saw', not the 'could', which is still true. Jesus only did what He saw the Father doing; so how about us? I would say that my main 'ministry' problem is that I often don't know what the Father is doing, and so I waste a lot of time and effort.

[2] To my surprise the verb here is φιλεω, not αγαπαω—the Father is emotionally attached to the Son. Well, since we have emotions God must have had them first. God affirms that He has soul (Isaiah 42:1, Matthew 12:18, Hebrews 10:38).

gap, but He did not find even one. Malachi 1:10 says that God looked for 'even one'. I would like to be such a person.

I understand that there is a fundamental difference between defense and offense. Consider Luke 10:19: "Take note, I am giving[1] you the authority to trample on snakes and scorpions,[2] and over all the power of the enemy,[3] and nothing at all may harm you." In Matthew 28:18 Sovereign Jesus affirms that He holds "all authority in heaven and on earth", so He is clearly competent to delegate some of that authority to us. "Nothing at all may harm you" clearly refers to self-defense. So, I understand that we already have God's authorization to use His power in self-defense. However, exactly how does "authority over all the power of the enemy" work in practice? We should use our authority to forbid the use of Satan's power, with reference to specific situations—in my experience, we must be specific.

Returning to offensive procedures, I confess that in my exposition of texts such as Psalm 149:5-9, 2 Corinthians 10:3-6 and 1 John 3:8, at least until now, I have left aside the need to consult the Father first, to know what He is doing. An omission that I intend to correct from now on.

P.S.: what I am proposing is a 'heavy-weight fight'; there will certainly be counter-attacks. So, whoever is going to participate needs to protect himself beforehand: protect himself, his family and his interests. A woman should only participate under the spiritual protection of her husband (1 Corinthians 11:10), and an unmarried daughter under her father (Numbers 30:3-8).

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[1] Instead of 'am giving', perhaps 2.5% of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, have 'have given' (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.)—a serious error. Jesus said this perhaps five months before His death and resurrection, addressing the seventy (not just the twelve). The Lord is talking about the future, not the past; a future that includes <u>us</u>!

[2] The Lord gives us the authority to "trample snakes and scorpions". Well now, to smash the literal insect, a scorpion, you don't need power from on High, just a slipper (if you're fast you can do it barefoot). To trample a snake I prefer a boot, but we can kill literal snakes without supernatural help. It becomes obvious that Jesus was referring to something other than reptiles and insects. I understand Mark 16:18 to be referring to the same reality. For a more detailed discussion, please see my article, "Are we to handle snakes?"

[3] In the armor described in Ephesians 6 we find "the sword of the Spirit" (verse 17). A sword is a weapon for offense, although it is also used for defense. The Text tells us that this sword is "the ρημα of God"—ρημα, not λογος. It is God's Word <u>spoken</u>, or applied. Really, what good is a sword left in its sheath? However marvelous our Sword may be (Hebrews 4:12), to produce effect it must come out of the scabbard. The Word needs to be spoken, or written—applied in a specific way.

In the Bible we have many examples where people brought the power of God into action by speaking. Our world began with a creative word from God—spoken (Genesis, 1:3, 6, 9, 11, 14, 20, 24, 26; and see Hebrews 11:3). Moses did a lot of speaking. Elijah spoke (1 Kings 17:1, 18:36, 2 Kings 1:10). Elisha spoke (2 Kings 2:14, 21, 24; 4:16, 43; 6:19). Jesus did a great deal of speaking. Ananias spoke (Acts 9:17). Peter spoke (Acts 9:34, 40). Paul spoke (Acts 13:11; 14:3, 10; 16:18; 20:10; 28:8). In short, we need to speak! But we need to consult the Father first.