



Eternal Fellowship News Bulletin

We believe in one GOD, in three persons; FATHER, SON and HOLY SPIRIT. We regard the Bible (both Hebrew Bible and New Testaments) as the only infallible authoritative WORD OF GOD.

HULDAH MINISTRY aims to return to the Word Of God, founded on Hebrew background and to interpret it from Hebraic perspective, acknowledging that Jesus is a Jew and the Jewish-ness of His teaching as a continuation from the Hebrew Bible. The Ministry also aims to put His teaching into practice, to have a closer relationship with the Lord, Jesus Christ, and to regularly have a Christian fellowship so that this-worldly kingdom of God will materialise in the midst of the followers of Jesus here and now, as well as earnestly seeking Christ's Return to establish the otherworldly Kingdom of God on earth.

All activities are free of charge and no obligation whatever. Just enjoy our fellowship!

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HULDAH MINISTRY

LETTER TO THE BROTHERS AND SISTERS IN CHRIST

【 SPIRITUAL WARFARE -1- 】

So, as the Holy Spirit says: "Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as you did in the rebellion, during the time of testing in the desert, where your fathers tested and tried me and for forty years saw what I did. That is why I was angry with that generation, and I said, 'Their hearts are always going astray, and they have not known my ways.' So I declared on oath in my anger, 'They shall never enter my rest'" See to it, brothers, that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God. But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called Today, so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness. We have come to share in Christ if we hold firmly till the end the confidence we had at first. As has just been said: "Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as you did in the rebellion."

Who were they who heard and rebelled? Were they not all those Moses led out of Egypt? And with whom was he angry for forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose bodies fell in the desert? And to whom did God swear that they would never enter his rest if not to those who disobeyed? So we see that they were not able to enter, because of their unbelief. Therefore, since the promise of entering his rest still stands, let us be careful that none of you be found to have fallen short of it. For we also have had the gospel preached to us, just as they did; but the message they heard was of no value to them, because those who heard did not combine it with faith. Now we who have believed enter that rest, just as God has said, "So I declared on oath in my anger, 'They shall never enter my rest'"

And yet his work has been finished since the creation of the world. For somewhere he has spoken about the seventh day in these words: "And on the seventh day God rested from all his work." And again in the passage above he says, "They shall never enter my rest." It still remains that some will enter that rest, and those who formerly had the gospel preached to them did not go in, because of their disobedience. Therefore God again set a certain day, calling it Today, when a long time later he

spoke through David, as was said before: "Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts." For if Joshua had given them rest, God would not have spoken later about another day. Hebrews 3:1-4:11.

The story of the ancient Israelites' experience facing the challenge of entering the promised land after their forty year wandering in the wilderness teaches us an important concept of spiritual warfare. Israelites had to battle for their inheritance; even for God's promised land, Canaan. The fact that Israel still needed to conquer her inheritance through faith and battle, although God had promised it to them already, lies in the reality of principalities and powers existing in heavenly places, i.e., the spiritual realm. As Paul told in Ephesians 6:12: ***'For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms,'*** spiritual warfare is real. C.S.Lewis wrote in the preface of his book *'The Screwtape Letters'*: 'There are two equal and opposite errors into which our race can fall about the devils. One is to disbelieve in their existence. The other is to believe, and to feel an excessive and unhealthy interest in them. They themselves are equally pleased by both errors and hail a materialist or a magician with the same delight.' It is indeed unfortunate that owing to scientific and rational narrow world view, disbelief of spiritual warfare issues seems to be prevalent among Christians. However, the biblical perspective in the ministry of Jesus clearly illustrates the existence of devils and demons and their undeniable and enormous influence in this world. Actually Jesus' ministry started with His victory over a confrontation with Satan, and then many captives under demonic forces were set free by Christ.

Numbers chapters 13 and 14 describe how the Israelites ended up as wilderness wanderers for forty years, which is such a long time after their dramatic "Exodus" from Egypt. God led Israel under the leadership of Moses from Egypt through the desert to Canaan. In the second year in the wilderness, twelve leaders from each tribe were sent to explore the land that God had promised to give as their inheritance. After a forty day exploration, however, what they reported to the whole Israelites community who had anxiously awaited good news was instead, bad news. Their negative, discouraging report utterly misguided the Israelites and it implanted fear deep in their minds. The whole assembly then gave way to unbelief and grumbled against Moses and Aaron. Among them who had explored the land were Caleb and Joshua. They were the only ones who maintained steadfast faith in the Lord and tried to dismiss fear and negative reactions from the community: ***"The land we passed through and explored is exceedingly good. If the LORD is pleased with us, he will lead us into that land, a land flowing with milk and honey, and will give it to us. Only do not rebel against the LORD. And do not be afraid of the people of the land, because we will swallow them up. Their protection is gone, but the LORD is with us. Do not be afraid of them."*** However, no sooner had the madly upset and misled whole assembly, stricken by false reports and negative thoughts, talked about stoning the two leaders, than God appeared and passed judgment upon those fear-stricken, rebellious Israelites: ***'How long will they refuse to believe in me, in spite of all the miraculous signs I have performed among them. I will strike them down with a plague and destroy them...'*** In response to the Lord's harsh word, Moses, appealing to His attribute of love and forgiveness, pleaded: ***'The Lord is slow to anger abounding in love and forgiving sin and rebellion.'*** God, having accepted Moses' intercession, forgave the Israelites. However, the consequence of their sin of disobedience and treating God with contempt is apparent. Such grumbling, wicked people were completely excluded from entering the land that God had promised on oath to their forefathers.

To them, the wandering in the desert was in fact, a death sentence: ***'In this desert your bodies will fall –every one of you twenty years old or more who was counted in the census and who has grumbled against God.'*** The exception was Caleb and Joshua who, having different spirits from the other disbelieving people, single-mindedly followed the Lord. Also, as for the children of the grumbling Israelites, who they were afraid would be taken as plunder by the inhabitants of the promised land such as the Amalekites, the Hittites, Jebusites, Amorites, and the

Nephilim, God instructed that they would enter the land and enjoy it in the end. However, the path was not optimistic for them at all. They not only needed to suffer for their fathers' unfaithfulness before entrance into the promised land, by being shepherds in the desert for forty years until the last member of the whole grumbling community died, but also even after entrance into the land they were obliged to continually fight for what God had promised for Israel through faith. The story of the Israelites entering the promised land is very relevant to Christ's followers for the following reason. It teaches the importance of overcoming or of being overcomers so that we can claim all of our God promised inheritance, whereas our eternal salvation is firmly secured by faith in Christ's once and for all redemption alone. In other words, while our eternal salvation is on the basis of God's grace alone, but for the overcoming faith against forth-coming difficulty, we might fail in entering into all the promises of God. The author of the Epistle of Hebrews expresses this entrance into God's promises as **'entering his rest'** as the passage quoted at the beginning. As clearly depicted in the story of Israel entering the promised land, by the same token, entering into all our inheritance in God's kingdom, requires an overcoming faith and perseverance in order to go thorough spiritual warfare.

When Jesus brought His kingdom onto the earth by preaching the gospel and doing the Father's work; setting free the afflicted from demons, healing the sick, and reaching out to the poor and the neglected from society, it meant that He revolutionarily invaded Satan's rule over the world. Since then, the **'prince of this world,'** Satan has severely been threatened by Jesus' first coming, and completely defeated at the cross and His resurrection, and his influence has been highly restricted. It was the clash of the two kingdoms; Satan's and God's that brought spiritual warfare into the lives of those who belong to Christ. Until Christ's second coming when Jesus is to come back to earth as King over the whole world as consummation of His earthly ministry, this spiritual warfare is to continue through which believers in Christ are called to overcome whatever circumstances which may pull them down from faith in Him; temptations in every area of human life, worldly ambition, materialism, religion, negative emotions, self-centred decision-making, selfish attitudes, wrong thoughts and so on. By Christ's death on the cross when His "flesh" was nailed down, and destroyed to eternal death, at the same time, thanks be to God, the devil completely lost his possession, his ruling area in man's body, his demons' dwelling place, i.e., "flesh". Paul triumphantly put it in Romans 8: ***'Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law was powerless to do in that it was weakened by sinful nature, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful man to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in sinful man, in order that the righteous requirements of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the sinful nature but according to the Spirit.'***

In the case of the ancient Israelites, they were overwhelmed by negative emotions such as fear and anger, and by wicked attitude towards God and their leaders, and also by wrong thoughts such as being slaughtered by the powerful inhabitants in the promised land. These were all simply caused by unbelief and they failed to overcome the confrontation. Behind the reality of what we understand as spiritual warfare is the devil, according to the Scriptures, who prowls around to devour anybody so that he aims to lead the whole world astray and ultimately destroy God's kingdom. Deceiving God's people with cunning lies, implanting in their minds mistrust towards God and His Word with doubt, undermining their security in Christ with condemnation, and causing strongholds to be raised in their thoughts and so on, all those are cause of the devil, the **'father of lies'** and the **'god of this world'**. Whenever God's people are engaged in advancing the gospel or pioneering work of His kingdom they often find themselves involved in attacks and counterattacks by the forces of darkness, though the reality of spiritual warfare does not seem to so much properly be understood and recognised among Christians. Concerning it, while there is

either disbelief in the issue or unhealthy interest in the demonic world, it does not seem to be taken seriously, either. However, there are some reasons why the issue should not be ignored:

(1) It was in Christ's ministry that the issue was raised, in that demonic confrontation was significantly dealt with. Not only did Jesus acknowledge Satan's and demons' existence but also those spiritual forces, exposed by Christ's presence, revealed themselves out of fear, and Jesus confronted the enemy to set free the people that were held captive. The story of Christ's deliverance of a demon possessed man from multiple demons called "**Legion**" in the region of the Gerasenes, the Gentile's town (Lk.8:26-39) was an apparent demonstration of having made the reality of demons' existence clear. By allowing demons to come out of the afflicted man and to go into the herd of pigs that were feeding on the nearby hillside, and also as a result, by allowing the herd to rush down the steep bank into the lake to be drowned, Jesus showed the existence of spiritual, dark forces to be real as a physical phenomenon witnessed by every eye.

(2) A large portion of Jesus' ministry was involved in deliverance of people from demonic power and He related His confrontation with demonic power to the advance of God's kingdom: **'But if I drive out demons by the finger of God, then the kingdom of God has come to you.'** In the same context, He also implied His ultimate victory over Satan and complete deliverance of his captives out of his rule: **'When a strong man, fully armed, guards his own house, his possessions are safe. But when someone stronger attacks and overpowers him, he takes away the armour in which the man trusted and divides up the spoils.'** (Lk.11:20-22). In other words, wherever the rule of Christ exists, there is God's kingdom even in this world. If the afflicted are set free, the sick are healed, the poor are cared for, and the gospel is preached to the sinner, God's kingdom which Jesus brought in, extends. When Jesus declared: **'I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy; nothing will harm you,'**(Lk.10:18-19), Satan's doom has virtually become a matter of time. Intimidated by the appearance of Christ on "earth," which the devil had believed to be his possession under his rule since the fall of man, and seeing that his time is very short before he will be thrown into the Abyss, where he would be kept from deceiving the nations for as long as a thousand years, the ancient serpent, the devil has started to more furiously prowl around for someone to devour than before. The Devil's aim is to attack and destroy God's agents and also their work of His kingdom because the only way left for him to resist God and His rule over what rightfully belongs to God from the beginning is to make the consummation of His kingdom on earth to be delayed as long as possible. For this purpose, the devil never ceases to make the effort of leading man into sin and infiltrating God's flock with false prophecies, teachings, rules and rituals, and thus, causing disillusion, confusion, contention, and division within His flock. Awareness of these devil's schemes working in the present age behind the scene is very important to fight through an effective spiritual warfare as individual believer's responsibility and activity, and thus, to become "overcomers" as Christ encouraged in His revelation to the seven churches in the province of Asia in Revelations, the last book of the New Testament.

(3) According to the Gospel of Mark, Jesus' great commission to His disciples was to drive out demons, along with going into all the world, preaching the gospel, baptising them and healing the sick. Mark made it clear that whoever believes and is baptised would be saved and those who believe would demonstrate God-given authority over demonic power. As all power and authority belong to the Sovereign Lord, no matter how the demonic forces appear to be strong, the true believers in Christ are to overcome Satan with steadfast faith in Christ, which in the end would culminate in a victorious loud voice in heaven: **'Now have come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Christ. For the accuser of our brothers, who accuses them before our God day and night, has been hurled down. They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony; they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death.'** (Re.12:10-11). This overcomers' confession testifies an

important point, that while the devil is a cause of spiritual warfare under the permission of God as Job chapters 1 and 2 depict, there is responsibility on the believer's side as well when it comes to whom the problems should be attributed to.

Needless to say, the devil and demons should not necessarily be blamed for every trouble we face. There are three facets to consider behind our daily problems; God's, Satan's and our own. **1.** In our lives, whenever problems take place we must remember the truth that our all-knowing God is in control. At the same time, **2.** Satan, the "*prince of this world*" attacks God's true followers who advance His kingdom, and he drives people into sinful fleshly lives. **3.** Our careless attitude and flesh-oriented lives with selfish thoughts, carnal desire and negative emotions easily open a gate to Satanic forces, which would take advantage of the unrepentant, weak areas of our lives by bringing power and control over us. Wherever we give in to worldly principles, instead of God's principles, Satan is quick to overpower and raise problems in these areas again and again until we fully admit it and repent it. We will examine more about this spiritual warfare in the next letter.

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This month a gift of car (Toyota Corolla Station Wagon EE102) has been sent to FREDERIC in Burundi. Also a money gift has been sent to help FREDERIC to pay the customs duty for it in Burundi. The car is to depart Japan on 19th June and to arrive at Tanzania port, Dar-Es-Salaam on 21st July. It takes around three days for FREDERIC to drive the car back home from the port. Pray for the safe transportation of the vehicle.

In Burundi, there is a great seminar being planed to be held on 2nd July, in which thirty pastors from ten refugee camps in Tanzania and thirty pastors from Burundi are gathering. FREDERIC is for the present preparing for this big event, by visiting pastors in the bordering area between the two countries to be involved and by encouraging them to come. This is a preparation for their near future repatriation so that they will be able to well integrate to the settlement. Pray for the Lord's assured guidance, best arrangement for their needs.