



CUNNING

Week 12: ACTS of Battle, Part I
2024 WINTER SERIES - Wednesday Night Church

1/3 rd – In the Beginning	2/21 st O – Hist./Wis Lt.?	4/17 th O – Epistles
1/10 th – O.T. Pent. The Battle Begins: Part I	2/28 th RCB-Wk.8 MIC	4/2 th O – Revelation
1/17 th RCB Prayer: Having the Conversation	3/6 th - JESUS Says Part I	WILL THIS SERIES GO UNTIL MAY?
1/24 th – O.T. The Battle	3/13 th O Jesus Says Part II	Can You See The End From Here? It's Been in the Plan Since Genesis
1/31 st – RCB Prophetic	3/20 th O – What John Saw	▪ Chew On This Podcast -drops Thur pm/Fri am-moving to our radio station WAJC 91.7/88.1 FM in February-Thursdays @8:30-9:30a
2/7 th – Water Baptism	3/27 th O – Acts I (Easter is 3/31 st)	
2/14 th RCB -Ordinances?	4/3 rd O – Acts II	
	4/10 RCB – Pauline Lit.	

- STUDY NOTES: Pr. Mike and Pr. Orleen's and Pr. Robin's sermon series and study notes.
- Kingdom Principles – Hayford, J. W. 1995. Hayford's Bible handbook. Thomas Nelson Publishers: Nashville
- **BOOK:** Cook, W. F., III, & Lawless, C. (2019). *Spiritual warfare in the storyline of scripture*. B&H Academic.
- **Handouts:** **Week 1:** Angelic Beings, H.O. of Week 1 Outline Notes. **Week 2:** H.O. of Week 2 Outline Notes.
- **Week 3:** Prayer reference; Sequence of Power **Week 5:** Daniel's Timeline
- **Week 9:** Wilderness Lesson H.O. **Week 10:** JN17 H.O

CUNNING: The Spiritual Battle from Genesis to Revelation

I am sending you out like sheep amongst wolves...Matthew 10:16

so be wise as serpents and innocent as doves. NRSV

Luke 10:3 *Go on your way; I am sending you out like lambs into the midst of wolves.*

Romans 16:19 *For your obedience is known to all; therefore, I rejoice over you, but I want you to be wise in what is good and guileless in what is evil. NRSV*

Our Definition of CUNNING: ~~Having or showing skill in achieving one's ends by deceit or evasion.~~

Having or showing skill in achieving one's ends by: **Knowledge. Wisdom. Shrewdness. Skill. Resourcefulness. Cleverness. Practice.**

WEEK 12: The ACTS of Battle

(all verses NKJV unless otherwise noted)

Now the Battle becomes more Personal

INTRO:

The Role of Misguide:

Having or showing [faulty](#) judgment or [reasoning](#).

Similar: **erroneous;** fallacious; unwarranted; unfounded; **unsound;** **misplaced;** misconceived; ill-advised; ill-considered; ill-judged; inappropriate; unwise; injudicious; imprudent; rash; foolish; **misinformed;** **misled;** **misdirected;** **wrong;** **mistaken;** **deluded**



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Example #1:

Sometimes the word “battle” “warfare” creates a large expectation – the Enemy is going to grab me and....when it actually is as subtle as letting our emotions misguide us as in the example of Peter:

Matthew 16:13-24 HCSB

¹³ When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, He asked His disciples, “Who do people say that the Son of Man is?”
¹⁴ And they said, “Some say John the Baptist; others, Elijah; still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets.”
¹⁵ “But you,” He asked them, “who do you say that I am?”
¹⁶ Simon Peter answered, “You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God!”
¹⁷ And Jesus responded, “Simon, son of Jonah, you are blessed because flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but My Father in heaven. ¹⁸ And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the forces^[1] of Hades will not overpower it. ¹⁹ I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth is already bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth is already loosed in heaven.”
²⁰ And He gave the disciples orders to tell no one that He was the Messiah.

His Death and Resurrection Predicted

²¹ From then on Jesus began to point out to His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders, chief priests, and scribes, be killed, and be raised the third day. ²² Then Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, “Oh no, Lord! This will never happen to You!”

²³ But He turned and told Peter, “Get behind Me, Satan! You are an offense to Me because you’re not thinking about God’s concerns, but man’s.”

Take Up Your Cross

²⁴ Then Jesus said to His disciples, “If anyone wants to come with Me, he must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow Me.

Understanding Quadrant Growth – maturity means growing in all four areas:
 Intellectually, Physically, Socially, Spiritually

ASK: Where was Peter missing it? Which quadrant?

Example #2:

Outlines the Enemy’s attempts to STOP Church growth

Proverbs 6:16-19

*These six things the Lord hates,
 Yes, seven are an abomination to Him:*

¹⁷ *A proud look, (arrogance)*

A lying tongue,

Hands that shed innocent blood,

¹⁸ *A heart that devises wicked plans,*

Feet that are swift in running to evil,

¹⁹ *A false witness who speaks lies,*

And one who sows discord among brethren.

ASK: He still is doing it today...are we helping the Enemy achieve his goal?

[We go to the church Jesus tells us to, gives us, etc. We do not church hop. We do not stop going to church. We do not let a church control us nor tell us what to do. We KNOW scripture. We engage in healthy friendships with other Christians.]



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LIES to move or not go to church that I see:

[Understanding Spiritual Abuse is not in this discussion. LEAVE – church, relationship, where you are **told** what to think, do, etc. There are consequences to disagreeing, rewards for just following. No love of teaching, discourse, dialogue. No healthy relationships within church body, etc.]

- It's THEIR Fault:

IF we castigate a church as our reason to go to another or to stop going to church at all, we are promoting disunity.

Castigating can sound like:

- Assigning intent:
 - The NOT: They do that **because** they are...Not Godly. Not lead by the Holy Spirit. I do not like them because there is something wrong with them. [You cannot seem to say you just disagree]
 - The DO: They do that **because** they are: Immature. Stupid. They eat PORK! Watch the Smurfs. Too happy. Too morose.

When we hear ourselves diagnosing intent, STOP, repent, and ask God how/where He wants you to love others.

- Fault Finding...JUSTIFICATION:
 - They are not using me to – (heal the sick, teach, preach, lead...never a question about being needed in the nursery☺)
 - They are not friendly
 - They are too concerned with this life and not spiritual life
 - Not spiritual enough

Whenever we justify our actions, pray.

Find out where God is moving and get involved anywhere there you can, not just where you think you deserve to be. ALL Church work/ministry is missions work.

It is not the Church's fault, nor the people's fault IF we leave one church for another.

WE LEAVE BECAUSE JESUS DIRECTS US TO GO SOMEWHERE ELSE.



WEEK 12: The ACTS of Battle
Now the Battle becomes more Personal

- The book of Acts Immediately follows Jesus’ – DBR
- Records 30 years of the New Church’s growth.
- **ACTS is where we see THE CHURCH taking over the battle:**

REMINDER: Our Definition of CUNNING: Having or showing skill in achieving one's ends by deceit or evasion.

Having or showing skill in achieving one's ends by:

Knowledge. Wisdom. Shrewdness. Skill. Resourcefulness. Cleverness. Practice.

Luke records the early church’s response to satanic resistance to the church’s advancement into the Greco-Roman world:

- Satan is mentioned **specifically** in only four passages in the book of Acts:
 Ananias & Saphira → Acts 5:1-11 – Consequences
 Peter & Cornelius Acts →10:30-48 – Bringing Freedom
 Paul & Barnabas in Cyprus (w/ Elymas the sorcerer) →Acts 13:1-12 – Standing up to Evil
 Paul before King Agrippa →Acts 26:12-18 – Sharing his testimony
- Enemy’s **influence** is manifested throughout the book.
- **Demons are specifically** mentioned in 5:16; 8:5–8; 16:16; and 19:12, 13–20.

View of the Church in Acts

Acts 4:42-47

And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine[teaching] and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers. ⁴³ Then fear came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles. ⁴⁴ Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common, ⁴⁵ and sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need. ⁴⁶ So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, ⁴⁷ praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added ^[d] to the church daily those who were being saved.

NLT ⁴² All the believers devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching, and to fellowship, and to sharing in meals (including the Lord’s Supper), and to prayer. ⁴³ **A deep sense of awe** came over them all, and the apostles performed many miraculous signs and wonders. ⁴⁴ And all the believers met together in one place and shared everything they had. ⁴⁵ They sold their property and possessions and shared the money with those in need. ⁴⁶ They worshiped together at the Temple each day, met in homes for the Lord’s Supper, and shared their meals with great joy and generosity— ⁴⁷ all the while praising God and enjoying the goodwill of all the people. And each day the Lord added to their fellowship those who were being saved.

- Wanting community.
- Willing to invest and be a part of.
- Understanding the <3 of the Patriarchal model.



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Ananias & Sapphira → Acts 5:1-11 – **Realize Consequences** (not a game)
Peter & Cornelius Acts → 10:30-48 – **Bring Freedom**
Paul & Barnabas in Cyprus (w/ Elymas the sorcerer) → Acts 13:1-12 – **Stand up to Evil**
Paul before King Agrippa → Acts 26:12-18 – **Testify**

THE FOUR ACTS of Battle

#1: Ananias & Sapphira – Acts 5:1-11

Names as descriptions:

- *Ananias* may mean “**The LORD is gracious**” (*khananyah* [2608, 2863]) or “**the LORD answers**” (*ánanyah* [6055, 6731]).
- *Sapphira*, from the Heb. *shiprah* [8235/8236, 9185/9186], means “**beautiful.**”

Biblical parallelisms:

Trites, A. A., William J. Larkin. (2006). [Cornerstone biblical commentary, Vol 12: The Gospel of Luke and Acts](#) (pp. 415–418). Tyndale House Publishers.

- Embezzlement and discovery (Achan in Josh 7; Johnson 1992:91)
- Immediate divine judgment resulting in death with removal of the bodies (Nadab and Abihu in Lev 10:1–5; Witherington 1998:214)
- Husband-wife conspiracy with respect to property (Ahab and Jezebel in 1 Kgs 21; Talbert 1997:66)
- Satan’s filling a heart for Jesus’ betrayal (Judas in Luke 22:3, 21–22; Acts 1:18–19; O’Toole 1995:204)
- Jesus’ temptation (O’Toole 1995:205–206),
- Adam and Eve’s fall (Gen 3; contra Marguerat 1993a)

Acts 5:1-11

But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession. ² And he kept back part of the proceeds, his wife also being aware of it, and brought a certain part and laid it at the apostles’ feet. ³ But Peter said, “Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit

- Ananias wanted to be thought of like Barnabas who had sold family property – A BIG DEAL Counter cultural living. Sold out, unheard of sacrifice.

Acts 5:3b-5a

and keep back part of the price of the land for yourself? ⁴ While it remained, was it not your own? And after it was sold, was it not in your own control? Why have you conceived this thing in your heart? [to do this evil] You have not lied to men but to God.”

⁵ Then Ananias, hearing these words, [immediately] fell down and breathed his last.

Peter sought to help Ananias see clearly what the cause of the fraud was.

- Satan filled Ananias’s heart with the prospect of **receiving praise for his generosity** while keeping \$ for his wife.
- Premeditated!



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- Lying to God. God will not be mocked - (5:9; Gal 6:7–8; cf. Acts 16:6–7).
- Testing the Lord (v.s. 5) in front of the new, burgeoning church. How far can we push sin before God is going to intervene? (Num 14:20–23; Ps 95:7–11; cf. Acts 15:10; Deut 6:16)
- He violated the entire church with his selfishness.
- Ananias was completely in control of this, ALL responsibility of the original decisions belongs with himself.
- The Land = a *ketubah*, \$ paid to a wife in case of divorce/death.

[This was a sin against God and merited severe punishment:

- Because it challenged God’s anointed – the apostles’ authority.
- It happened in the presence of a community in which the Spirit dwelt.
- Involved an oath.
- Created a breach in the unity and purity of the fellowship

Trites, A. A., William J. Larkin. (2006). [Cornerstone biblical commentary, Vol 12: The Gospel of Luke and Acts](#) (pp. 415–418). Tyndale House Publishers.

Burial with no mourning, no community!!!! Public disgrace...on purpose.

[Peter did NOT ask this death to happen. **WHY** did it?]

Peter’s role was not to pronounce a sentence of death (contra Dunn 1996:64) but to speak a prophetic, explanatory word, responding in “anguish and anger” to so serious a crime (O’Toole 1995:194; Witherington 1998:218).]

Trites, A. A., William J. Larkin. (2006). [Cornerstone biblical commentary, Vol 12: The Gospel of Luke and Acts](#) (pp. 415–418). Tyndale House Publishers.

Acts 5:5b-11

So great fear came upon all those who heard these things. ⁶ And the young men arose and wrapped him up, carried him out, and buried him.

⁷ Now it was about three hours later when his wife came in, not knowing what had happened. ⁸ And Peter answered her, “Tell me whether you sold the land for so much?” She said, “Yes, for so much.”

⁹ Then Peter said to her, “How is it that you have agreed together to test the Spirit of the Lord? Look, the feet of those who have buried your husband are at the door, and they will carry you out.” ¹⁰ Then immediately she fell down at his feet and breathed her last. And the young men came in and found her dead, and carrying her out, buried her by her husband. ¹¹ So great fear came upon all the church and upon all who heard these things.

- Sapphira arrived ignorant of what had transpired.
- Peter’s query was not a trap but an opportunity for her to confess her sin.
- She revealed she was a part of this planning and deception.

Evil: Accepting the Lie **how** we do something does not matter. End justifies the Means. People are for us to manipulate or not as important as ourselves.

Lying > To oneself to manipulate others to believe something about you that isn’t true.

Lying > To others, the public.

Lying > To the LORD /Holy Spirit



What begins these steps a human makes towards this????

Battle: How do we battle this evil?



Acts 5:12-16

*¹² And through the hands of the apostles many **signs and wonders were done among the people**. And they were all with one accord in Solomon’s Porch [temple area]. ¹³ Yet none of the rest dared join them, but the people esteemed them highly. ¹⁴ And believers were increasingly added to the Lord, multitudes of both men and women, ¹⁵ so that they brought the sick out into the streets and laid them on beds and couches, that at least **the shadow of Peter** passing by might fall on some of them. ¹⁶ Also a multitude gathered from the surrounding cities to Jerusalem, bringing sick people and those who were **tormented by unclean spirits**, and they were all healed.*

If this BATTLE is now ours, WHAT do we DO? Be concerned and Pray for Healing

Am I Ready?(engage)

- **Peter’s shadow** (Acts 5:15b)., **Paul’s shadow** (Acts 19:11–12)
 Only 2 places in scripture this “shadow” healing is mentioned.

The demons are referred to as “unclean” (*akathartos*), a term often used by Jesus (Luke 4:33, 36; 6:18; 8:29; 9:42; 11:24). The spirits “tormented” those they inhabited. The word “tormented” (*ochleō*, Acts 5:16) only occurs here in the New Testament, describing the horrible condition of those inhabited by demons. The apostles clearly carried on the healing and exorcism ministry of Jesus. The miracles confirmed their connection to Jesus. While a distinction is made between those who were sick and those set free from demon possession, they all were “healed” (*therapeuō*).
 Cook, W. F., III, & Lawless, C. (2019). [Spiritual warfare in the storyline of scripture](#) (pp. 96–97). B&H Academic.

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#2: Peter and the Household of Cornelius (Bringing FREEDOM)

Acts 10:38

how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, who went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him.

Acts 10:30-48

³⁰ So Cornelius said, ^[a]“Four days ago I was fasting until this hour; and at the ninth hour I prayed in my house, and behold, a man stood before me in bright clothing, ³¹ and said, ‘Cornelius, your prayer has been heard, and your ^[b]alms are remembered in the sight of God. ³² Send therefore to Joppa and call Simon here, whose surname is Peter. He is lodging in the house of Simon, a tanner, by the sea. ^[c]When he comes, he will speak to you.’ ³³ So I sent to you



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immediately, and you have done well to come. Now therefore, we are all present before God, to hear all the things commanded you by God.”

Preaching to Cornelius’ Household

³⁴ Then Peter opened his mouth and said: “In truth I perceive that God shows no partiality. ³⁵ But in every nation whoever fears Him and works righteousness is accepted by Him. ³⁶ The word which God sent to the ^[d]children of Israel, preaching peace through Jesus Christ—He is Lord of all— ³⁷ that word you know, which was proclaimed throughout all Judea, and began from Galilee after the baptism which John preached: ³⁸ **how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, who went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him.**

³⁹ And we are witnesses of all things which He did both in the land of the Jews and in Jerusalem, whom ^[e]they killed by hanging on a tree. ⁴⁰ Him God raised up on the third day, and showed Him openly, ⁴¹ not to all the people, but to witnesses chosen before by God, even to us who ate and drank with Him after He arose from the dead. ⁴² And He commanded us to preach to the people, and to testify that it is He who was ordained by God to be Judge of the living and the dead. ⁴³ To Him all the prophets witness that, through His name, whoever believes in Him will receive remission^[f] of sins.”

The Holy Spirit Falls on the Gentiles

⁴⁴ While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who heard the word. ⁴⁵ And ^[g]those of the circumcision who believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles also. ⁴⁶ For they heard them speak with tongues and magnify God. Then Peter answered, ⁴⁷ “Can anyone forbid water, that these should not be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?” ⁴⁸ And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then they asked him to stay a few days.

³⁸ *how God **anointed** Jesus of Nazareth **with the Holy Spirit** and with **power**, who went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him.*

James 2:6

But you have dishonored the poor man. Do not the rich **oppress** you and drag you into the courts?

katadynasteuō is a verb found only twice. In both instances it means “to oppress” with the **underlying sense of being harassed or tormented**. In Acts 10:38 such activity is predicated of the devil. Jas. 2:8 accuses the rich of such behavior towards the poor.¹

1. Being anointed by the Holy Spirit

ANOINT, a-noint’, **ANOINTED**, a-noint’ed (ἀλείφω, *aleíphō*, χρίω, *chríō*): Refers to a very general practice in the East. It originated from the relief from the effect of the sun that was experienced in rubbing the body with oil or grease. Among rude people the common vegetable or animal fat was used. As society advanced and refinement became a part of civilization, delicately perfumed ointments were used for this purpose. Other reasons soon obtained for this practice than that stated above. Persons were anointed for health (Mk 6:13), because of the widespread belief in the healing power of oil. It was often employed as a mark of hospitality (Lk 7:46); as a mark of special honor (Jn 11:2); in preparation for social occasions (Ruth 3:3; 2 Sam 14:2; Isa 61:3).

¹ [Oppress, Oppression](#). (2005). In S. D. Renn (Ed.), *Expository Dictionary of Bible Words: Word Studies for Key English Bible Words Based on the Hebrew and Greek Texts* (p. 703). Hendrickson Publishers.



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The fig. use of this word (*chriō*) has reference strictly to the coming of the Holy Spirit upon the individual (Lk 4:18; Acts 4:27; 10:38). In this sense it is God who anoints (He 1:9; 2 Cor 1:21). The thought is to appoint, or qualify for a special dignity, function or privilege. It is in this sense that the word is applied to Christ (Jn 1:41 m; Acts 4:27; 10:38; He 1:9; cf Ps 2:2; Dnl 9:25). See also ANOINTING.²

2. And With Power

If this BATTLE is now ours, WHAT do we DO?

John 5:19-21

¹ Then Jesus answered and said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do; for whatever He does, the Son also does in like manner. ²⁰ For the Father loves the Son, and shows Him all things that He Himself does; and He will show Him greater works than these, that you may marvel. ²¹ For as the Father raises the dead and gives life to them, even so the Son gives life to whom He will.

John 14:12-13

¹² "Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater works than these he will do, because I go to My Father. ¹³ And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.

Hebrews 5:13-14 NRSV

¹³ for everyone who lives on milk, being still an infant, is unskilled in the word of righteousness. ¹⁴ But solid food is for the mature, for those whose faculties have been trained by practice to distinguish good from evil.

Recognize what is evil and stand up against it/expose it.

Matt 10:27 NRSV

What I say to you in the dark, tell in the light, and what you hear whispered, **proclaim from** the housetops.

Learn to distinguish it from practice

Being anointed by the Holy Spirit

Be Brave...truly care for others. **ASK** for miracles, healings, energy to be **WITH** others. **Live healthy. Not give in to temptations of this world. Boundaries.**

List: One thing that stands in my way of being **WITH**/ministering to others.

Am I Ready?(engage)

² Kapp, J. W. (1915). [Anoint, Anointed](#). In J. Orr, J. L. Nuelsen, E. Y. Mullins, & M. O. Evans (Eds.), *The International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia* (Vols. 1–5, p. 138). The Howard-Severance Company.



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#3: Paul & Barnabas in Cyprus (with Elymas [el' a mus] the sorcerer = evil opposition)

Acts 13:10

and said, “O full of all deceit and all fraud, you son of the devil, you enemy of all righteousness, will you not cease perverting the straight ways of the Lord?”

Acts 13:1-12

Now in the church that was at Antioch there were certain prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. ² As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, “Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.” ³ Then, having fasted and prayed, and laid hands on them, they sent them away.

Preaching in Cyprus

⁴ So, being sent out by the Holy Spirit, they went down to Seleucia, and from there they sailed to Cyprus. ⁵ And when they arrived in Salamis, they preached the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews. They also had John as their assistant.

⁶ Now when they had gone through the island to Paphos, they found a certain sorcerer, a false prophet, a **Jew whose name was Bar-Jesus**, ⁷ who was with the proconsul, Sergius Paulus, an intelligent man. This man called for Barnabas and Saul and sought to hear the word of God. ⁸ But **Elymas the sorcerer** (for so his name is translated) withstood them, seeking to turn the proconsul away from the faith. ⁹ Then Saul, who also is called Paul, **filled with the Holy Spirit**, looked intently at him ¹⁰ and said, “O full of all deceit and all fraud, you son of the devil, you enemy of all righteousness, will you not cease perverting the straight ways of the Lord? ¹¹ And now, indeed, the hand of the Lord is upon you, and you shall be blind, not seeing the sun for a time.” And immediately a dark mist fell on him, and he went around seeking someone to lead him by the hand. ¹² Then the proconsul believed, when he saw what had been done, being astonished at the teaching of the Lord.

Acts 13:6–12: Opposition by Elymas the Magician on Cyprus

The third reference to Satan in Acts appears in this passage. Barnabas and Saul’s initial stop on their first missionary journey took them to the island of Cyprus. They traveled to Paphos, where they encountered a Jewish false prophet named Bar-Jesus (“son of Jesus”). Earlier Saul (Paul) and Barnabas were identified as “prophets and teachers,” setting the stage for a battle between them and the false prophet (13:1). The false prophet is identified also by the name “Elymas the sorcerer” (*magos*). Apparently, Elymas held great sway over the proconsul Sergius Paulus, likely being an advisor. This is the second encounter missionaries have had with a magician (8:9–11, 18–24).

Luke described in some detail Saul’s encounter with Elymas:

First, Paul was filled with the Holy Spirit, indicating that his actions were not capricious but under the Spirit’s control.

Second, Paul looked straight into Elymas’s eyes as he spoke to him, confronting him face-to-face, demonstrating great courage and not the slightest hint of fear.

Third, Paul accused him of being “full of all kinds of deceit and trickery” (13:10) in contrast to Paul being “filled with the Spirit” (v. 9a).



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Fourth, Elymas is “a son of the devil and enemy of all that is right” (v. 9b). Jesus used similar language when speaking of the religious leadership that opposed him (John 8:44; cf. Matt 13:38). Instead of being a “son of the Savior” (Bar-Jesus), Elymas was a child of God’s ultimate enemy.

Fifth, by use of a rhetorical question, Paul indicated that his opponent was seeking to keep the proconsul from following the Lord.

Sixth, as Elijah announced God’s judgment on the false prophets of Baal on Mount Carmel, Paul pronounced judgment on this false prophet. The result was immediate, as blindness came on him. The limited time of the blindness would hopefully result in Bar-Jesus “seeing the light” of the gospel. As a result of the encounter between Paul and Elymas, Sergius Paulus trusted in Christ. So just as the gospel advanced in Samaria, so it did on Cyprus.

As the gospel goes into unreached areas, satanic resistance is to be expected. Whether he uses sorcerers, or shamans, or persecution, Satan will not concede ground easily. Mission teams should expect strong opposition to the preaching of the gospel. They must be Spirit-filled and prepared to experience spiritual warfare. The sort of encounter described in this passage should likely be understood as an illustrative vignette, that is, the type of encounter that can be anticipated when preaching to unreached people groups.

Notice in this passage how a significant political figure seemed to be under the sway of a “son of the devil.” Sergius Paulus very likely sought advice from Elymas. We should not limit the influence of Satan merely to the personal choices people make in their private spiritual lives. Here is an example where political decisions may have been influenced by Satan. Therefore, we should not be surprised when governments pass laws forbidding the sharing of the gospel and advocate the persecution of Christians. What is true in the political arena is likely true as well in entertainment and culture.

Finally, the power of God and the gospel overwhelmed the forces of darkness. Satan was unable to keep the Roman proconsul in the grip of the false prophet. God brought salvation to one and a temporary judgment to the other.

Cook, W. F., III, & Lawless, C. (2019). [Spiritual warfare in the storyline of scripture](#) (pp. 96–97). B&H Academic.

If this BATTLE is now ours, WHAT do we DO?

Stand up to Evil

Am I Ready?(engage)

- | |
|---|
| Ananias & Saphira → Acts 5:1-11 – Realize Consequences (not a game)
Peter & Cornelius Acts →10:30-48 – Bring Freedom
Paul & Barnabas in Cyprus (w/ Elymas the sorcerer) →Acts 13:1-12 – Stand up to Evil
Paul before King Agrippa →Acts 26:12-18 – Testify |
|---|

THE FOUR ACTS of Battle

#4: Paul before King Agrippa

Acts 26:18

to open their eyes, in order to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith in Me.’

Acts 26:12-18

¹² “While thus occupied, as I journeyed to Damascus with authority and commission from the chief priests, ¹³ at midday, O king, along the road I saw a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, shining around me and those who journeyed with me. ¹⁴ And when we all had fallen to the ground, I heard a voice speaking to me and saying in the Hebrew language, ‘Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me? It is hard for you to kick against the goads.’ ¹⁵ So I said, ‘Who are You, Lord?’ And He said, ‘I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. ¹⁶ But rise and stand on your feet; for I have appeared to you for this purpose, to make you a minister and a witness both of the things which you have seen and of the things which I will yet reveal to you. ¹⁷ I will deliver you from



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the Jewish people, as well as from the Gentiles, to whom I now send you, ¹⁸ to open their eyes, in order to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith in Me.'

¹⁹ "Therefore, King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision, ²⁰ but declared first to those in Damascus and in Jerusalem, and throughout all the region of Judea, and *then* to the Gentiles, that they should repent, turn to God, and do works befitting repentance. ²¹ For these reasons the Jews seized me in the temple and tried to kill *me*. ²² Therefore, having obtained help from God, to this day I stand, witnessing both to small and great, saying no other things than those which the prophets and Moses said would come— ²³ that the Christ would suffer, that He would be the first to rise from the dead, and would proclaim light to the *Jewish* people and to the Gentiles."

Agrippa Parries Paul's Challenge

²⁴ Now as he thus made his defense, Festus said with a loud voice, "Paul, you are beside yourself! Much learning is driving you mad!"

²⁵ But he said, "I am not ²⁵ mad, most noble Festus, but speak the words of truth and reason. ²⁶ For the king, before whom I also speak freely, knows these things; for I am convinced that none of these things escapes his attention, since this thing was not done in a corner. ²⁷ King Agrippa, do you believe the prophets? I know that you do believe."

²⁸ Then Agrippa said to Paul, "You almost persuade me to become a Christian."

²⁹ And Paul said, "I would to God that not only you, but also all who hear me today, might become both almost and altogether such as I am, except for these chains."

³⁰ When he had said these things, the king stood up, as well as the governor and Bernice and those who sat with them; ³¹ and when they had gone aside, they talked among themselves, saying, "This man is doing nothing deserving of death or chains."

³² Then Agrippa said to Festus, "This man might have been set free if he had not appealed to Caesar."

If this BATTLE is now ours, WHAT do we DO?

Testify

Am I Ready?(engage)



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Demons Mentioned:

Acts 8:5–8, 9-25

Then Philip went down to ^[a]the city of Samaria and preached Christ to them. ⁶ And the multitudes with one accord heeded the things spoken by Philip, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did. ⁷ For unclean spirits, crying with a loud voice, came out of many who were possessed; and many who were paralyzed and lame were healed. ⁸ And there was great joy in that city.

Acts 8:5–8: Miracles and Exorcisms by Philip in Samaria

The next episode of interest is Acts 8:5–8 in connection with Philip’s ministry in Samaria. Luke wrote,

Philip went down to a city in Samaria and proclaimed the Messiah to them. The crowds were all paying attention to what Philip said, as they listened and saw the signs he was performing. For unclean spirits, crying out with a loud voice, came out of many who were possessed, and many who were paralyzed and lame were healed. So there was great joy in that city.

This passage is the first major advancement of the gospel outside strictly Jewish confines. As a result of Stephen’s death, a great persecution broke out against the church, especially toward Hellenistic Jewish Christians. In his ministry to Samaria, Philip is an example of those who fled Jerusalem, taking the gospel with them.

While there is much debate about some of the specifics of Philip’s ministry in Samaria, we focus first on Acts 8:5–25. Luke reported that Philip’s preaching and the miracles he performed caused the crowds to listen and respond to the gospel. Philip was first introduced into the story in Acts 6, when the apostles chose seven men to oversee the distribution of food to the Hellenistic widows. Both Stephen (6:8) and Philip are described as performing miracles. Philip preached the gospel, healed the sick, and cast out demons just as the apostles did. The spirits crying out (*boāō*) as they were expelled (Mark 1:26) must have been common. Philip is an example of someone other than the apostles who cast out demons and performed miracles.

Acts 8:9–25: Satanic Opposition in Samaria by Simon the Magician

While Satan and demons are not mentioned in this narrative, it is not improbable that the appearance of a magician implies satanic opposition to the Spirit’s work in Samaria. The story of Simon plays a major role in Luke’s description of what took place there. When people saw the miracles Philip performed and heard the gospel message he preached, they turned their attention away from Simon and put their faith in Christ (8:12).

The people had believed Simon to be a man of substantial powers. They referred to him as “the Great Power of God” (8:10). While he was called a magician, he should not be understood to be an illusionist, but rather, he was likely involved in something akin to black magic or the occult. Eckhard Schnabel describes magic in the ancient world:

In the ancient world—what today we would call witchcraft, sorcery, or the occult—was based on the view that human beings, gods, demons, and the invisible world are all connected by sympathies and antipathies in ways that can be influenced by rituals involving incantations and the manipulation of objects. Its purpose was to overcome public or private problems. Usually magic was defensive, harnessing the powers of the gods or spirits in order to gain protection against diseases and demons.

Arnold also provides helpful background information on magic in the ancient world.

In the ancient world magic was not the art of illusion. It was predicated on the reality of spiritual forces (both personal and impersonal) and the belief that they could be coerced and manipulated. A magician was someone who had a deep knowledge of the spirit world and could prescribe the right incantation, formula, or ritual to obtain the desired results.

Luke described Simon as having believed and been baptized (8:13a). Luke may have intended to call into doubt the genuineness of Simon’s faith when he indicated that he was fascinated by Philip’s ability to perform “signs and great miracles” (8:13b). After Peter and John came from Jerusalem, Simon saw the Holy Spirit being imparted through the laying on of the apostles’ hands. He offered them money for the same power (8:18–19).

Peter’s response was immediate and strong (8:20–23). Simon’s issue was a wicked heart. He was “poisoned by bitterness” and “bound by wickedness.” Rather than calling out for mercy, Simon begged Peter to pray for him (8:24–25). Although Simon is described as having believed in Jesus and being baptized, the narrative depicts him as one having spurious faith (cf. John 2:23–25).

The passage provides some insight on spiritual warfare even though neither Satan nor demons are mentioned. First, the narrative flow indicates that just as Satan sought to derail the work of the Spirit in Jerusalem through Ananias and Sapphira, he did the same in Samaria with Simon the magician. The black magic performed by Simon would have been performed by the power of the devil (cf. Matt 24:24; 2 Thess 2:9). The Old Testament forbids all forms of magic. As long as the Samaritans were under Simon’s spell, they could not be saved. Philip’s power encounter demonstrated clearly the truthfulness of his words and resulted in many people turning from darkness to light. Just as demons stand behind false gods, so demons are involved in black magic.

Second, money and power are a dangerous combination. Peter’s strong response to Simon’s attempt to buy power with money is intended to warn the readers of Acts about this serious issue. Ajith Fernando notes how money is presented in Acts as a factor in a number of devious actions by Judas (1:18), Ananias and Sapphira (5:1–11), the owners of the soothsaying girl (16:16–19), and Demetrius the silversmith (19:24–27). Finally, saying definitively whether Simon became a Christian may not be possible, but the narrative flow indicates he was a distraction to the work of the gospel.

¹ Cook, W. F., III, & Lawless, C. (2019). *Spiritual warfare in the storyline of scripture* (pp. 81–97). B&H Academic.



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Acts 16:16-34

¹⁶ Now it happened, as we went to prayer, that a certain slave girl possessed with a spirit of divination met us, who brought her masters much profit by fortune-telling. ¹⁷ This girl followed Paul and us, and cried out, saying, "These men are the servants of the Most High God, who proclaim to us the way of salvation." ¹⁸ And this she did for many days.

But Paul, greatly ^[L]annoyed, turned and said to the spirit, "I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her." And he came out that very hour. ¹⁹ But when her masters saw that their hope of profit was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the marketplace to the authorities.

²⁰ And they brought them to the magistrates, and said, "These men, being Jews, exceedingly trouble our city; ²¹ and they teach customs which are not lawful for us, being Romans, to receive or observe." ²² Then the multitude rose up together against them; and the magistrates tore off their clothes and commanded them to be beaten with rods. ²³ And when they had laid many stripes on them, they threw them into prison, commanding the jailer to keep them securely. ²⁴ Having received such a charge, he put them into the inner prison and fastened their feet in the stocks.

The Philippian Jailer Saved

²⁵ But at midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them. ²⁶ Suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken; and immediately all the doors were opened and everyone's chains were loosed. ²⁷ And the keeper of the prison, awaking from sleep and seeing the prison doors open, supposing the prisoners had fled, drew his sword and was about to kill himself. ²⁸ But Paul called with a loud voice, saying, "Do yourself no harm, for we are all here."

²⁹ Then he called for a light, ran in, and fell down trembling before Paul and Silas. ³⁰ And he brought them out and said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"

³¹ So they said, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household." ³² Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house. ³³ And he took them the same hour of the night and washed their stripes. And immediately he and all his family were baptized. ³⁴ Now when he had brought them into his house, he set food before them; and he rejoiced, having believed in God with all his household.

Acts 16:16–18: Paul Casts a Fortune-Telling Demon out of a Slave Girl

On Paul's second missionary journey, he encountered a demon-possessed slave girl in the city of Philippi. Paul's ministry in Philippi is summarized around three key events: the conversion of Lydia, the exorcism of the slave girl, and the conversion of the jailer. Paul developed a very close relationship with the young church at Philippi, as demonstrated in his letter to them.

The demon-possessed slave girl is another example of the devil attempting to subvert the gospel's advancement. Luke intended the reader to notice the great contrast between Lydia and the slave girl. Lydia is named; whereas, the slave girl's name is not mentioned. Lydia appears to have been educated and successful, but the slave girl was likely illiterate and impoverished. Lydia was religious; the slave girl was demon possessed. Whether the girl was able to foretell the future or not is unclear. However, she clearly was profitable for her masters.

Literally, the slave girl was said to have a "spirit of divination" (*pneuma pythōn*) that enabled her to predict the future. Garland describes the background to the cult:

It was associated with the oracles delivered at Delphi, where, in the cult's mythology, the god Apollo had killed the dragon that protected the sanctuary. Apollo then became the deity of the sanctuary. The spirit possessing the girl was not considered to be a malign one but was presumed to enable persons to predict the future.

Her rantings concerning the missionaries attracted unwelcome attention. Just as the demons in the Gospels acknowledged the true identity of Jesus, the demon in the girl knew the identity of Paul and Silas. Even though the demon spoke the truth, its words could easily be misunderstood by the locals. The Jewish population would have thought of the God of Israel when she spoke of "the Most High God" (*hypsistos theos*); the locals may have thought either of Zeus or some local pagan deity. Her message regarding salvation also could have been easily misinterpreted. The Greek text lacks the article before "way of salvation," and so could be understood as referring to "a way of salvation," rather than "the way of salvation."

After several days, Paul became greatly annoyed. He did not appear to appreciate the free publicity she must have attracted for them. Luke graphically described the exorcism. Paul turned toward the girl and commanded the spirit to come out. He addressed the spirit "in the name of Jesus" and not his own authority. To address the spirit "in Jesus's name" is to confront it as Jesus's emissary. He did not enter into a conversation with the spirit. Paul was not interested in the testimony of a demon. Luke makes it clear that the demon responded by immediately coming out of the girl.



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While the story is extremely brief, Luke intended it to illustrate the power of Jesus through the apostle in the expulsion of a demon. Paul's method was to invoke Jesus's authority by the use of his name. His method stands in sharp contrast to the extreme methods of other exorcists in the ancient world. Furthermore, with the arrest of Paul and Silas, Satan appears to get the better of them. The truth is the imprisonment resulted in the salvation of the jailer. Once again, God vanquished his ancient foe.

¹ Cook, W. F., III, & Lawless, C. (2019). [Spiritual warfare in the storyline of scripture](#) (pp. 81–97). B&H Academic.

Acts 19:12–20

¹² so that even handkerchiefs or aprons were brought from his body to the sick, and the diseases left them and the evil spirits went out of them. ¹³ Then some of the itinerant Jewish exorcists took it upon themselves to call the name of the Lord Jesus over those who had evil spirits, saying, ^[a] “We ^[b] exorcise you by the Jesus whom Paul preaches.” ¹⁴ Also there were seven sons of Sceva, a Jewish chief priest, who did so.

¹⁵ And the evil spirit answered and said, “Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are you?”

¹⁶ Then the man in whom the evil spirit was leaped on them, ^[c] overpowered them, and prevailed against ^[d] them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded. ¹⁷ This became known both to all Jews and Greeks dwelling in Ephesus; and fear fell on them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified. ¹⁸ And many who had believed came confessing and telling their deeds. ¹⁹ Also, many of those who had practiced magic brought their books together and burned them in the sight of all. And they counted up the value of them, and it totaled fifty thousand pieces of silver. ²⁰ So the word of the Lord grew mightily and prevailed.

Acts 19:11–20: Extraordinary Miracles, a Failed Exorcism, and the Renouncing of Magic

Paul spent more time in Ephesus on his third missionary journey than in any city he visited on his previous two journeys. The chief goddess of the city was Artemis, but there were many other gods and goddesses worshiped there. The temple of Artemis was one of the seven wonders of the ancient world.

Ephesus was renowned as a center for magical practices in the Mediterranean world. While magic and the occult were practiced throughout the ancient world, Ephesus acquired a significant reputation for it.

After describing Paul's teaching ministry (19:8–10), Luke describes God performing “extraordinary miracles” through Paul's clothing (19:11–12). Pieces of the apostle's work clothing were said to result in healings and exorcisms on those on whom they were placed. The facecloths (*soudarion*) were used to wipe off sweat, and the Greek word for aprons (*simikinthion*) refers more generally to a piece of clothing or even something akin to a belt. The miracles certainly confirmed the truthfulness of Paul's message. The extraordinary nature of these miracles is reminiscent of miracles associated with Peter's shadow in Jerusalem.

The story of the sons of Sceva is intended to contrast the power and authority of Paul's ministry with local folk beliefs (19:13–17). The demons knew the spiritual condition of the seven sons. The exorcists were seeking to use the authoritative name of Jesus even though they had no right to the name. Fitzmyer aptly comments: “Luke is trying to get across the idea that Christianity has nothing to do with magic, and that Jesus' name is no magical-incantation formula.” The demons knew who these so-called exorcists were when they asked them, “Who are you?” However, they intended to get them to answer the question, “Who do you think you are?”

Many of the young believers in Ephesus had not yet completely renounced their past sinful activities (19:18–20). They were like many who come to faith in Christ but find their lives still entangled in the sins they renounced. When word spread of the horrifying experience of the sons of Sceva, many of the young converts saw the danger of continuing to dabble in sorcery. As a result, they destroyed their magical books and paraphernalia. The pull toward their old life was so strong they determined to rid themselves of any vestige of it.

The passage provides numerous insights on the topic of spiritual warfare. First, Jewish exorcists commonly traveled about casting out demons. Exorcisms in the ancient world were not uncommon, as was seen even in the Gospels. Second, the seven sons understood that Jesus's name had authority over demons, yet they failed to understand that it could not be used without a relationship to Jesus. Third, Paul had a reputation of being able to cast out demons. Apparently, even though Paul is not described as casting out demons at Ephesus, his reputation for being an exorcist was substantial. Fourth, the demons knew that the Jewish exorcists did not have the right to use Jesus's name. They were aware of the spiritual condition of these exorcists. Fifth, a demon can cause a person to act violently toward others, as was seen in the story of the Gadarene demoniac as well. Finally, once again, Jesus triumphed over the devil by using the situation to advance the gospel and sanctify his people.

¹ Cook, W. F., III, & Lawless, C. (2019). [Spiritual warfare in the storyline of scripture](#) (pp. 81–97). B&H Academic.

If this BATTLE is now ours, WHAT do we DO?

Are You Ready?(engage)