

3 Crucial Questions about Spiritual Warfare, Clinton E. Arnold, 1997

Arnold's book, belonging to a seminar-based series called 3 Crucial Questions, is purposed to address the three most concerning questions of spiritual warfare in the Christian life in a comprehensible, descriptive manner through illustrations and tables as well as through the use of real-world examples from contemporary & early church history and Scripture.

In the *Editors' Preface*, the editors Grant R. Osborne and Richard J. Jones, Jr. emphasize that there are many crucial questions of the Christian faith that are without concrete final answers, and that each generation partly affirms its solidarity with the Christian past by reaffirming "the faith which was once delivered unto the saints" (Jude 3 KJV); going on to describe the book's content of "words to live by and sound instruction in successful Christian living."

Clinton E. Arnold lists these three questions in the *Author's Preface* which highlight the main idea of each chapter: first, what spiritual warfare is all about; second, whether a Christian can be demon-possessed; and third, whether we have a responsibility to engage territorial spirits. All these are part of a very important question which asks what the Bible teaches about these issues (Arnold 13).

A table of contents, an *Illustrations* index, two prefaces (of the editors and of the author), and an *Abbreviations* section precede three long chapters—titled after, and seek to address, the three main questions about spiritual warfare—which each contain several sections and subsections. Each chapter concludes with a summary and a list of sources for recommended reading. After the chapters come three sections: Notes, General Index, and Scripture Index.

In chapter one, Arnold discusses the answer to the question, “What is spiritual warfare?”, by laying out the concept thereof and defining it as the cosmic conflict between God and Satan, good and evil, and believers and non-believers. He emphasizes that spiritual warfare is not a physical battle, but rather a spiritual one that is fought through prayer, obedience to God, and spiritual weapons such as faith, truth, and the Word of God, such as listed in Ephesians 6:10-18 (Arnold 55). Arnold explores the origins of this conflict and the various strategies and tactics used by Satan to wage war against God's people. He stresses the importance of understanding spiritual warfare and being prepared for it, as it is a fundamental aspect of the Christian life.

Clinton E. Arnold discusses the concept of demon-possession and the answer to the question, “Can a Christian be demon-possessed?”, in chapter two. Arnold argues that while a Christian cannot be demon-possessed, they can still be subject to demonic influence and attack. He emphasizes the biblical evidence that once a person becomes a Christian, they are indwelt by Holy Spirit and become a new creation in Christ (Arnold 85), making them impervious to demonic possession (Arnold 79). However, Arnold cautions that Christians are not immune to the attacks of the enemy and must remain vigilant in their spiritual lives to resist the devil and his schemes.

In chapter three, Clinton E. Arnold examines the answer to the question, “Are we called to engage territorial spirits?”. Territorial spirits are defined by Arnold as demonic forces that exert influence over geographic regions or cultural groups. Arnold argues that while there may be evidence of territorial spirits in the Bible, Christians are not required to directly target and engage them in spiritual warfare. He cautions that such an approach can lead to a fixation on demonic activity and distract from the central focus of the gospel. Instead, Arnold emphasizes the importance of focusing on the spiritual battle that takes place within individuals, and

encourages Christians to engage in spiritual practices such as prayer, Bible study, and worship in order to grow in their faith and resist the attacks of the enemy. Arnold also cautions against the danger of spiritual arrogance, in which individuals believe they have the power to control or command demons. He argues that such an approach is contrary to the biblical teaching of relying on the power of God and Holy Spirit in spiritual warfare. Overall, Arnold's argument is that while territorial spirits may exist, Christians are not specifically called to engage them in spiritual warfare, and should instead focus on faithfully serving Christ and His people and resisting the attacks of the enemy in their personal lives.

The intended audience of this book is all Christians who desire to augment their growth in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ” (Arnold 12).

The author seems to endorse the AD Prayer Track for 2000 and the Future. The abbreviations section could have properly been better placed at the end of the book where the Notes, General Index, and Scripture Index are respectively located. The author is convincing in his points because he effectively uses Scripture and the examples of the early Christian ministers, such as Irenaeus and the work of Hippolytus *Apostolic Tradition* and *Apostolic Constitution* (Arnold 107-108, 111-112), to persuade his audience to live a pure, victorious life of spiritual warfare as a soldier in the army of God against the kingdom of darkness.

Arnold's work strongly implies that the overall answer to these questions of spiritual warfare of the audience is to be vigilant (watch and pray) and aware of the dark world we live in, yet to wholly confide in & keep our eyes on the Lord Jesus Christ and remember that He is sovereign over all things and will put an end to Satan and his principalities for good when He returns.

The book can change the audience by encouraging them to be more involved in the body of Christ and, with love, faith, mercy, and righteous, obedient surrender to Him, proclaim the message of God's salvation and minister His kingdom to others who are yet lost.

This book is highly recommended for a mature Christian audience who are truly seeking to be closer to the Lord Jesus Christ and loosed from Satan's grip and demonic influences.

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