



Introduction

Two worlds are in coexistence, the natural world and the spiritual world. The natural world is the physical one in which we live and which is visible to the eye, tangible to the hand, and audible to the ear. The spiritual world is as real as the natural, physical world but is not accessible to our human senses. We as human beings possess two types of nature: the physical and the spiritual. St. Paul confirms the existence of these two bodies in 1 Corinthians 15:40, the natural who understands only what pertains to the natural world and the spiritual man who understands what pertains to the Spiritual world. *"There are also celestial bodies and terrestrial bodies; but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another"* (1 Corinthians 15:40).

Two Spiritual Kingdoms

Just as there are two worlds so are there two kingdoms.

1. The first kingdom is Satan's kingdom occupied by the demons and all earthly minded people abiding in sin and rebelling against God. It is ruled by a debased system controlled and dominated in darkness by Satan. In Matthew 4:9

Satan professed his possession of the world "*All these things I will give You if You will fall down and worship me.*" Our Lord Jesus Christ in His last prayer (John 17) prayed to the Father "*I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one*" (John 17:15).

2. The second kingdom is God's kingdom heavenly in nature, ruled by God Himself and occupied by the angels, the heavenly hosts, the righteous, the departed saints waiting in the Paradise of Joy and the righteous on earth who strive to reach this kingdom by living a holy life according to the scripture being part of Christ's body the body of the church. That is what Christ meant by saying, "*the kingdom of God is within you*" (Luke 17:21).

While still here on this earth, we are potential residents of either one of these two spiritual kingdoms based on our choices and how we conduct our moral life.

God's Kingdom

Only believers in the Savior Jesus Christ, who are baptized and continue to live under the rule of God, led and directed by the Holy Spirit are residents of

the Kingdom of God and the Kingdom of God dwells in them. It also resides communally in the church, "the One Holy Catholic (universal) and Apostolic Orthodox Church" (Holy Creed). In the second coming of Jesus the Kingdom of God will be manifested and revealed.

The Spiritual Warfare

Spiritual discernment is the tool to understanding what pertains to the spirit and the spiritual warfare.

"But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned" (1 Corinthians 2:14). Those who are

spiritually blind or not in touch with their spirit cannot understand the nature of the spiritual warfare. The story in the Old testament (2 Kings 6) is the best illustration of the existence of the two worlds and what goes on in either of the two. During the fierce battle that was taking place in the city where Elijah lived, victory seemed farfetched to Elisha's servant, Gehazi, and he fell in despair. Elijah the prophet and man of God could see through his spiritual eyes what was going on in the metaphysical world and knew that victory was theirs. In order to restore his servant's confidence, he prayed to God to open the servant's eye to what was going on in the supernatural realms. Miraculously, the servant was

connected and could see with his physical eyes multitudes of angels surrounding the city. This experience of having the physical eyes opened onto the supernatural world is neither the norm nor an everyday experience. However, we need to acquire spiritual discernment which is, by definition, the ability to connect with and understand what is spiritual.

The Nature of the Spiritual Warfare

This is an invisible unnatural incessant war between the two spiritual kingdoms, between God and Satan, with Satan being the attacker and offender striving to capture God's children as captives in his kingdom. St. Paul likens this war to wrestling (Ephesians 6:12) in which residents of the Kingdom of God are a constant target under attack. But they enter this war already sure of victory because they abide in Christ empowered by the Holy Spirit. *"In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world"* (John 16:33). This war is of three types:

1. *Social battle*: between us and the world we live in. All the pain, sufferings, hardships, tribulations, afflictions, diseases, attacks of all sorts, and poverty are weapons used by Satan against us. Christ never promised us an easy life void of tribulations. On the contrary he

promised us *"In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world"* (John 16:33).

2. Personal battle: between the flesh and the spirit. Satan utilizes the flesh and all it desires to strike a war against the spirit.

3. Supernatural battle: between us and Satan with all his spiritual powers. St. Peter described this war well saying, *"Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour"* (1 Peter 5:8).

The Gospel of the good shepherd (John 10:10) defines who Satan is: a thief, a murderer and a destroyer. Christ, the good Shepherd came *"that we may have life and have it more abundantly"* (John 10:10).

How and When the Battle Started

The battle started in heaven with an angel named Lucifer, the beautiful and mighty (Isaiah 14:12-17) who rebelled against God's supremacy and eventually fell from his post and became Satan

(short for Sataniel meaning opponent). A group of angels joined Satan in the rebellion. In Revelation 12:9, Archangel Michael and some angels fought the dragon. The name 'Michael' 'Mi-Ka-Eel' literally means "who is similar to God". Satan's tool is deceit and he "turns the world astray" stealing, destroying and killing; and as it is prayed in the liturgy, "we fell by the deception of the serpent". That is why we are repeatedly warned in the Holy Bible to take heed of Satan's tricks and deceit.

The Consequences of the Battle

God knew that Satan would use his power of trickery to deceive Adam and Eve, so He warned them. But Satan overpowered them with his lies forgetting that God originally created them in His likeness and image and that the whole economy of the incarnation and salvation was to restore them back to His original likeness. In following Satan, Adam and Eve transferred themselves from the kingdom of God to that of Satan and drove themselves out of the garden by their own free will. The whole human race was in Adam's loins and inherited the condemnation inherent in the disobedience (Romans 5:12) and for five thousand years tried in vain to liberate themselves. But God's love and mercy followed them in the plan of Salvation "*He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel*" (Genesis 3:15). The

offspring is Christ, the woman being the Blessed Virgin Mary.

In the fullness of time God became Man to set us free from the captivity and transferred us to the kingdom of His Son's love (Colossians 1:13-14). God did not send His Son to the world to condemn us but to set us free (1 John 3). Christ bound Satan setting boundaries to him. However, like in an aftermath Satan.

The Consequences of Salvation

Christ's dying on the cross granted us forgiveness, liberation and propitiation but did not take away our freedom of choice. In baptism actual exorcism takes place and we are spiritually born again into the kingdom of God. But that is not the end of the battle with Satan. Satan still wants to be the supreme ruler and still seeks to apply his deceitful techniques on us enticing people to temporary lust and sinful behavior. His rebellion will continue till the second coming of Christ when he will be thrown into the lake of fire and the Kingdom of God will be manifested ushering in the commencement of Eternal Life. Christ's Redemptive act on the cross provided the potential to liberation but did not eliminate Satan's evil from the world allowing both to exist till the judgment day. But there is no fellowship between light and darkness. He who is

with Christ cannot be with Satan at the same time, "*He who is not with me is against me*" (Matthew 12:30). This truth is revealed in the parable of the tares and the Good Seed which will be allowed to grow to be separated later on (Matthew 13:38).

How to Win the Battle

Forewarned is forearmed. St. Paul warns us to be knowledgeable about Satan's tricks so that he may not take advantage of us through his maneuvers and tactics. If people understand that fights are prompted by Satan, they will stop attacking each other and will ally to unite in prayer and submission to God against a common enemy. "*lest Satan should take advantage of us; for we are not ignorant of his devices*" (2 Corinthians 2:11). Continuing in fights is a sign of carnality, "*And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual people but as to carnal, as to babes in Christ. I fed you with milk and not with solid food; for until now you were not able to receive it, and even now you are still not able; for you are still carnal. For where there are envy, strife, and divisions among you, are you not carnal and behaving like mere men?*" (1 Corinthians 3:1-3).

Conclusion

There are two spiritual kingdoms one belonging to Christ and the other to Satan. Christ's kingdom is one of peace, unity, love and friendship. Satan's

kingdom is one of turmoil, fights, hatred and dissensions which are manifest outwardly in the physical, financial, relational, emotional, spiritual, and mental battles. Satan will not cease to attack us in order to take us captives. Therefore, we should be aware and fortified with the spiritual weaponry. The world may try to fix the evil in it through education, laws, improved environment but to no avail because the visible evil is the result of the invisible evil underlying the spiritual warfare and cannot be corrected by natural means. The question that is to be asked: To which kingdom do we belong? One cannot be a resident in both kingdoms.

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