

Prayer: The Offensive Weapon in Spiritual Warfareⁱ

And they(we) overcame him (Satan) by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they(we) loved not their(our) lives unto the death. (Rev 12:11, KJV)

Introduction

Prayer plays a key role in extending the Kingdom of G-d and leading people to Messiah *Yeshua*. But to pray with power we must firstly go back to the Atonement—the Blood of the Lamb. You see, when Satan lost at Calvary, he has done what every loser does the day after the game: **‘DOWNPLAY THE OTHER TEAM’S VICTORY’**. How? By giving excuses, that’s how (this didn’t happen because...of bad calls, bad refs, etc.) He gets people to believe consciously or unconsciously that *Yeshua* dies for just a few select ones—not for the entire world. Thus we see the Body of Messiah developing sophisticated, well-documented doctrines to believe that G-d already took care of the battles, that we are no longer in a spiritual battle, or that He chose only a few, etc. **‘Don’t bother about that,’** they say, **‘G-d knows what He is doing and He doesn’t need us.’** People develop an apathy about G-d, about G-d’s power, and about the lost being saved. This is contrary to Scripture, since in 2 Peter 3:9 we are told that: *“The L-rd is not slow in keeping his promise, as some people think of slowness; on the contrary, he is patient with you; for it is not his purpose that anyone should be destroyed, but that everyone should turn from his sins.”* The truth is that Messiah *Yeshua* died for everybody, not just for a few. We also have in Matthew 28, the so-called Great Commission. Is it a suggestion? No! It is a command. Then if it is a command, doesn’t the command carry a penalty if it is not done? How do we do it then? Since such a command seems impossible to us, we do to our *Abba (Avi)* what our children do to us: *“Dad, is that what you meant? I thought all you wanted me to do was to pick up a few sticks around the yard.”* We say, *“Is that what you meant L-rd?”* *“You see,”* we explain, *“as the L-rd opens doors and gives us grace and in the measure that He leads us, we’ll do it.”* Thus we back up and give ourselves excuses for our lack of obedience to the Great Commission.

We are often a Powerless Army

Why is it that there is so little power demonstrated in the Gospel today? In Acts we have 11 men commissioned and then we see power encounters all over the place until in a century, the Good News has reached even the emperor! Three questions come to mind:

- Q1: Why so little power?
- Q2: Why so little impact on an increasingly godless society?
- Q3: Must we face the world today with less power than the first century Messianic movement?

The early Messianic movement (1) conquered hostile governments, (2) overcame persecution, (3) endured martyrdom, (4) defeated pagan religions, and (5) overcame deep prejudices and anti-Semitism. They did it with no money, no media (cell phones, blackberries, TV, radio, internet, newspapers, telephones or fax) and no printing presses or Bibles. They overcame all of those obstacles! How about the promise?

²⁰*And they went out and proclaimed everywhere, the L-rd working with them and confirming the message by the accompanying signs. (Mark 16:20)*

Was this a one-time shot? *‘That was then, this is now’* some say. Why is it so different today? The early Messianic Community had a secret! You want to know what it is? You’ll find it in Acts 1:8 (*“But you will receive power when the Ruach HaKodesh comes upon you”*) There it is! Ordinary men with extraordinary power literally turned the world upside down. Power and Prayer—prayer from men, power from G-d. The best outline for the entire Book of Acts is this: Prayer followed by Power. This is the only explanation for what happened: G-d’s power on behalf of the prayers of His Congregation. There was no money, no political status, no evangelistic training, etc. Has the Gospel lost its power today? What is wrong? Let me share some observations in the corporate Body of Messiah:

- Our prayers are not much more effective than oriental religions
- We have leaders who are Believers that have never seen a miracle, a power encounter or a dramatic answer to prayer.
- Except for doctrine, our meetings are not much different than City Commission, Jehovah Witness or Unitarian meetings.
- Our leadership meetings are no different than a corporation: always based on \$\$, availability of people, and effort.
- Our congregations and churches are prayerless and powerless.

The Body has developed a theology of powerlessness—to explain why G-d will not do what He said He would do. We have what seem to be doctrines looking for ‘excuses for G-d.’ When a new Believer finds “...*Trust in the L-rd Yeshua, and you will be saved—you and your household!*” we explain it away: “*now brother, you cannot expect any miracles, salvation is a process, you see...*” We explain so G-d will not be embarrassed. We cannot take a chance. “*Can you imagine what would happen if we pray for something that never comes true?*”

PROBLEM: We have become ignorant of the power available to us through prayer.

In being ignorant, we have conceded a key weapon to Satan (see 2 Cor. 2:11 “*so that we will not be taken advantage of by the Adversary...*”)—advantage through ignorance (cf. Hosea 4:6). Anything we ignore in Scripture is a door of opportunity for Satan.

We live in defeat because we are ignorant of our access to G-d and G-d’s power available to us in prayer. The Enemy’s Plan Revealed

Do we have any ‘military intelligence’ in order for our army to conduct military maneuvers against Satan’s kingdom? You bet. Where do you think these plans are revealed? If you guessed Torah, you guessed right! It is in the Book of Exodus, chapter 1.

“Yosef died, as did all his brothers and all that generation. ⁷The descendants of Isra’el were fruitful, increased abundantly, multiplied and grew very powerful; the land became filled with them. ⁸Now there arose a new king over Egypt. He knew nothing about Yosef ⁹but said to his people, “Look, the descendants of Isra’el have become a people too numerous and powerful for us. ¹⁰Come, let’s use wisdom in dealing with them. Otherwise, they’ll continue to multiply; and in the event of war they might ally themselves with our enemies, fight against us and leave the land altogether.”

Exodus (Shemot) is the story of our people’s redemption from the enslavement in Mitzrayim (Egypt). The story is analogous to our situation today. Let Egypt=World, Pharaoh=Satan and Israel=the Believing Community. The early Messianic fathers used typology to teach from the *Tanakh* (Hebrew Scriptures). What was Pharaoh’s (therefore, Satan’s) greatest fear? (see vv. 9) It was not that the children of Israel are mighty (they are, and he knows it) but that they discover that they are mightier (then they would join those that hate him and depart from captivity). Today we are mightier in Messiah than Satan and all his demons but many have not yet discovered this truth! Every time in history that the Believing Community has risen up against Satan they have won—not once have they been defeated! But today the Body of Messiah is no longer fighting. Satan knows that we are mightier than he is. This is established by G-d and proclaimed in Scripture. The Body knows it intellectually, in theory, but not in practice. You get this kind of mindset: “*Brother, it is OK to teach people that our L-rd is the L-rd of Hosts and our G-d is a mighty G-d, but do not get any warfare around here! Quiet and silence is what pleases G-d the most,*” they say. We tell the winning team: “**DO NOT PLAY ANYMORE!**” *Shemot* details for us a plan of Satan that includes three major components: (1) Deception, (2) Domination and (3) Destruction

What turned it around? Did they have an army? NO! Did they have \$\$? NO! Did they have allies? NO! Did they have political influence? NO! THEY CRIED UNTO TO G-D AND G-D DELIVERED THEM SUPERNATURALLY! This is the kind of prayer we need—the kind that brings supernatural deliverance.

KEY TO PRAYER: Every time we pray confronting the principalities and powers on an issue in which there is clear Biblical evidence that they have no right to be in, we provide the legal and moral framework and justification for G-d to release His power.

This is not the way many of us we were taught in Christianity! No wonder we do not get the results we want! We are used to testifying about the Life in Messiah, but we get poor results with this strategy. We preach about this life to the POW camps of Believers, to those behind barbed wire fence camps which are enslaved by the enemy's forces. But they are captives inside the fence and blind! The Bible says that the G-d of this world blinds them (see 2 Cor. 4:4). But what we have to do is to bind the strong man, to place the guards under the authority of Messiah in order that the captives can escape and run to their freedom! You see, *HaSatan* is a liar and a deceiver. Scripture tells us that *Yeshua* already paid the price for every person in this planet (not only for their lives but also for their health and infirmities). The Promised Land is no longer in the hands of the bank or the mortgage company, the title is in the Believers (and therefore our) hands.

The problem is that there are squatters in our inherited property, and they do not want to leave. We read them the “*decrees*” but they do not make a move, they are not gentlemen. What we have to do is serve them with an expulsion notice. We have authority from the Father's Supreme Court to drive them out and it reads clearly: “Out!”

What we have done is to preach the wisdom of G-d before preaching the power of G-d, and by changing the sequence, we get nothing (or very little). We teach people about *Yeshua* and then try to get His power and it takes a LONG TIME. In fact, this is why people in the churches do not tithe, and instead steal, lie, look at pornography in magazines, TV, movies, etc. They tell us, “*brother, we are saved and baptized and we are working out our salvation.*” Yet in Argentina, Uruguay, Mexico, Venezuela, Puerto Rico and Colombia and in countless other places (notably, many outside the US) homosexuals change instantly, alcoholics are delivered, chain smokers quit immediately, drug addicts are delivered from cocaine, heroin, etc. When you ask them “*what happened to you?*” they reply: “*I do not know, one moment I was dead but now I live. One moment I was blind, but now I see!*” We act like the Pharisees: “*Now here, let me see your credentials...*” But the blind man says: “*Glory to G-d I was blind but now I see. I cannot explain what happened, but I have the proof—I can see!*”

We are here to serve an expulsion notice to *HaSatan* and his hosts; we have come to cleanse His Congregation. You see, power is not understood, power is experienced. You do not have to have a PhD in nuclear physics to understand a nuclear bomb, just throw it and you will see, even if you do not even understand what a neutron is! The Power of G-d operates in order to cause the Wisdom of G-d to take root.

ⁱ Portions adapted from Ed Silvoso 1992