

The background of the image is a dark, moody sky filled with heavy, swirling grey and black clouds, suggesting a storm or a dark, ominous atmosphere. The text is centered horizontally and vertically.

THE INVISIBLE WAR  
AGAINST SATAN



## Part 8: The Biblical Mode of Spiritual Warfare



William Ernest Henley

# Introduction

Things can change overnight. Those who have bought into William Ernest Henley's (1849-1903) poem, *Invictus*, learn soon enough the harsh reality that one's "unconquerable soul" is actually susceptible to being subjugated by a devastating blow to the body or soul. Henley's now popular, confident assertion, "I am the master of my fate: I am the captain of my soul," brandishes the illusion that "I am in control of my life and destiny. I will determine what my future will be." The Lord says otherwise: "Surely, as I have planned, so it will be, and as I have purposed, so it will stand" (Is. 14:24).



# Introduction

After the War of 1812, President James Madison authorized the construction of a new coastal defense system, fortresses from Maine to Louisiana, which were thought to be invincible. They consisted of thick massive walls of brick and earth and were structurally designed to take a beating from any enemy cannon. One of these forts, Fort Pulaski, was placed in the middle of the Savannah River. During secession, the state of Georgia took control of the fort, considered to be one of the finest of the fortresses. One of the Union army's chief of engineers, Joseph Totten, said of this fort, "You might as well bombard the Rocky Mountains." Robert E. Lee agreed. The distance from Tybee Island was too far for Union artillery to breach the fort's infrastructure.



# Introduction

However, Union Captain Quincy Gillmore intended to do just that and brought 36 heavy guns and mortar onto Tybee Island – one mile from Fort Pulaski's walls. The Confederates, however, felt safe. Smoothbore cannonballs would not be able to penetrate the fort's 11-foot thick walls. But Gillmore decided to use an unproved weapon – the rifled cannon. Spiraled grooves on the inside of the cannon matched the grooves on the projectile, enabling it to spin and travel at a much greater distance and with more accuracy. He installed 10 of these new weapons on Tybee Island. On April 11, 1862, the Union guns opened fire. One by one the rifled cannon disabled the Confederate guns (they had 48, but only half could be turned toward the Union position).



# Introduction

The Union projectiles began to loosen the brick on the outside of the wall, after which the smoothbore cannon would begin to destroy the weakened bulwark. By nightfall, the fort had suffered heavy damage. In the morning, the rifled cannon continued to do their work. Soon, a large breach in the fort's walls enabled Union artillery to threaten Fort Pulaski's powder magazine. At 2:30 in the afternoon, only 30 hours after the bombardment of the once mighty Fort Pulaski had begun, a flag of truce was flown, and the fort was surrendered.





Fort Pulaski





# Introduction

The rifled cannon and the fall of the “invincible” Fort Pulaski is a sobering reminder for us, that “the flaming missiles of the evil one” can lead to our downfall. “Pride goes before destruction and a haughty spirit before a fall” (Prov. 16:18). We would do well to listen to John Calvin’s warning that Satan is “the most powerful, the most crafty, the most indefatigable (untiring), the most completely equipped with all the engines (wiles) and the most expert in the science of war.”

Therefore, how we engage in spiritual warfare against him and his malevolent demons is of utmost importance. Longing for day-by-day victory, we must not listen to “fiction, superstition, fantasy, nonsense, nuttiness, or downright heresy.” What does God’s Word tell us?

# What Weapons Have We Been Given?

- When we are angry or fearful, do we cast the demon of anger or fear out of us or another?
- When we are tempted and give in, do we blame Satan?
- Which authors and teachers are leading us astray into unbiblical practices related to spiritual warfare?
- Is there a demonic component to some of the things which have happened to us from earlier times until the present?
- Can warfare prayers bind, loose, and take authority over dark powers?

***Let's begin our quest for answers by investigating the life of our Lord.***

# The Greek Word for “Cast Out”

- The Greek word *ekballo* is formed from the word *ballo* (ballistic) = to throw + *ek* (exit) = from, out of, away from. The compound word, then, means “to drive out, to expel, literally, “to throw out, more or less, forcibly” (Arndt and Gingrich). Oxford scholars Liddell and Scott similarly define *ekballo* as “to throw or cast out of a place, banish.”
- “In the NT *ekballo* has particularly the sense of *to expel* or *to repel*, especially in the case of demons who have settled in men as in a house (Mt. 12:44) into which they have unlawfully penetrated (Mk. 1:34,43; 3:15,22f.; 9:38, etc.)” (Kittel).
- “And He cast out the spirits with a word...” (Mt. 8:16).

# Passages Related to Casting Out Demons

- **Unspecified:** “And when evening had come, they brought to Him many who were demon-possessed; and He **cast out the spirits** with a word, and healed all who were ill” (Mt. 8:16).
- **The Gadarene Demoniac:** “And the demons began to entreat Him, saying, ‘If You are going to **cast us out**, send us into the herd of swine’” (Mt. 8:31).
- **The Blind and Dumb Man:** “Then there was brought to Him a demon-possessed man who was blind and dumb, and He healed him, so that the dumb man spoke and saw....[the Pharisees said] ‘This man **casts out** demons only by Beelzebul the ruler of the demons’” (Mt. 12:22-24).

# Passages Related to Casting Out Demons

- **A Dumb Man In Capernaum:** “And as they were going out, behold, a dumb man demon-possessed was brought to Him. And after the demon was **cast out**, the dumb man spoke; and the multitudes marveled saying, ‘Nothing like this was ever seen in Israel’” (Mt. 9:32-33; Lk. 11:14).
- **Unspecified:** “And having summoned His twelve disciples, He gave them authority over unclean spirits, to **cast them out**; and to heal every kind of disease and every kind of sickness” (Mt. 10:1).
- **Unspecified:** “Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, **cast out demons**; freely you received, freely give” (Mt. 10:8).
- **Unspecified:** “If I **cast out** demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you” (Mt. 12:28).

# Passages Related to Casting Out Demons

- **The Epileptic Boy After the Transfiguration:** “And when they came to the multitude, a man came up to Him, falling on his knees before Him, and saying, ‘Lord, have mercy on my son; for he is an epileptic, and is very ill; for he often falls into the fire, and often into the water. And I brought him to Your disciples, and they could not cure him.’ And Jesus answered and said, ‘O unbelieving and perverted generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I put up with you? Bring him here to Me.’ And Jesus rebuked him, and the demon came out of him, and the boy was cured at once. Then the disciples came to Jesus privately and said, ‘Why could we not **cast it out**’” (Mt. 17:14-18).

# Passages Related to Casting Out Demons

- **Unspecified:** “And He healed many who were ill with various diseases, and **cast out** many demons; and He was not permitting the demons to speak, because they knew who He was” (Mk. 1:34).
- **Unspecified:** “And He went into their synagogues throughout all Galilee, preaching and **casting out** the demons” (Mk. 1:39).
- **Unspecified:** “And He went up to the mountain and summoned those whom He Himself wanted, and they came to Him. And He appointed twelve, that they might be with Him, and that He might send them out to preach, and to have authority to **cast out** the demons” (Mk. 3:13-15).

# Passages Related to Casting Out Demons

- **Unspecified:** “And they (the Twelve) went out and preached that men should repent. And they were **casting out** many demons and were anointing with oil many sick people and healing them” (Mk. 6:12-13).
- **The Daughter of the Syrophenician Woman:** “But after hearing of Him, a woman whose little daughter had an unclean spirit, immediately came and fell at His feet. Now the woman was a Gentile, of the Syrophenician race. And she kept asking Him to **cast the demon out** of her daughter....And He said to her, ‘Because of this answer go your way; the demon has gone out of your daughter’” (Mk. 7:25-26,29; Mt. 15:21-28).



# Passages Related to Casting Out Demons

- **Deaf and Dumb Boy:** “And one of the crowd answered Him, ‘Teacher, I brought You my son, possessed with a spirit which makes him mute; and whenever it seizes him, it dashes him to the ground and he foams at the mouth, and grinds his teeth, and stiffens out. And I told Your disciples to **cast it out**, and they could not do it.’...And they brought the boy to Him. And when he saw Him, immediately the spirit threw him into a convulsion, and falling to the ground, he began rolling about and foaming at the mouth. And He asked his father, ‘How long has this been happening to him?’ And he said, ‘From childhood. And it has often thrown him both into the fire and into the water to destroy him. But if You can do anything, take pity on us and help us!’

# Passages Related to Casting Out Demons

“And when Jesus saw that a crowd was rapidly gathering, He rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it, ‘You deaf and dumb spirit, I command you, **come out of him** and do not enter him again.’ And after crying out and throwing him into terrible convulsions, it came out; and the boy became so much like a corpse that most of them said, ‘He is dead.’ But Jesus took him by the hand and raised him; and he got up” (Mk. 9:17-27; cf. Lk. 9:37-43).

- “Now after He had risen early on the first day of the week, He first appeared to Mary Magdalene, from whom He had **cast out** seven demons” (Mk. 16:9).



## A.B. Bruce

“In every case of which we have details there was a disease, either madness, or epilepsy, or dumbness, or dumbness accompanied with blindness, or chronic muscular contraction. These diseases were as real as are the mental and nervous maladies with which our experience makes us familiar; and they must not be explained away because one happens to think that the notion of possession was a delusion.”

- *The Miraculous Element in the Gospels*



# The Mode of Our Warfare

- The Bible does not teach us to wage spiritual warfare by casting out demons.
- Jesus Christ “mounted a two-pronged offensive against the powers of evil – against **moral** evil and **situational** evil” (Powlison).
- **Moral evil** is the recognition that “by the transgression of the one (Adam), death reigned through the one” (Rom. 5:17) and that “through one transgression there resulted in condemnation to all men” (vs. 18). Man is totally depraved, which means “that everyone is depraved in the totality of their being. There is no part of us that is left untouched by sin. Our minds, our wills, and our bodies are affected by evil” (R.C. Sproul).



# Moral *and* Physical Evil

“It must be remembered that the kingdom of Satan is very comprehensive. It is the kingdom of evil; not merely of moral evil, but of physical evil viewed as the direct effect, or as the symbol of moral, or as in sympathy and affinity with it. Satan must be conceived not less comprehensively. The Satan idea has not only an ethical side, of which we are accustomed to think too exclusively, but also a physical. He is not only the father of those who sin, but he is the tyrant of those who suffer, especially those who suffer from diseases which touch the mind, and so disable from entering into the kingdom in a way which ordinary physical maladies do not.”

- A.B. Bruce



# The Mode of Our Warfare

- “We cannot and must not soften the blow; we cannot and must not pretend that evil isn’t that bad after all” (N.T. Wright). “For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Rom. 6:23).
- “Satan’s organizing passion is to draw us into moral evil, making us like him and ruling us. When the Bible says that the Son of God appeared to destroy the works of the devil, it means moral evil first and foremost” (Powlison).
- “The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and death” (Rom. 8:2).



# The Mode of Our Warfare

- **Situational Evil** is the evil we experience in our lives, which includes the consequences of our sins, including suffering, pain, sorrow, difficulties, and unpleasant events.
- **Moral Evil** causes **situational evil**.
- Satan provokes moral evil and, as a murderer, applies situational evil (e.g., Job's children being killed, Paul's thorn in the flesh, etc.).
- “God consistently portrays inhabiting evil spirits as *situational* – not moral – evils that hurt and abuse people” (Powlison). Note the emphasis in the Gospels that demons caused miserable conditions like muteness, epilepsy, deafness, blindness, seizures, and illnesses.



# The Mode of Our Warfare

- Jesus cast out demons to alleviate suffering in people. “The result of an ekballistic deliverance is relief, peace, and the restoration of mental and physical capabilities. It does not directly lead to moral improvement.” (Powlison).
- “The New Testament never links demonization to moral evil in the person who has a demon....Not a single example in the Bible shows Jesus or the apostles using EMM (Ekballistic Mode of Ministry) to deal with moral evil” (Powlison).
- From Romans through the Book of Revelation, there are **no** examples of demons being cast out for moral evil.



# How To Fight Moral Evil

- “Be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might” (Eph. 6:10).
- “Put on the full armor of God, that you may be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil” (Eph. 6:11).
- “Take up the full armor of God, that you may be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm” (Eph. 6:13).
- “Resist the devil and he will flee from you” (James 4:7).
- “Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls about like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour” (1 Pt. 5:8).



# The Classic Mode of Spiritual Warfare

The leading elements of the classic mode of spiritual warfare are best captured by Ephesians 6:10-20:

- Reliance on the power and protection of God, our Refuge
- Embracing and having faith in the Word of God
- Specific obedience and turning from evil involvements (repentance)
- Fervent and focused prayer
- Mutual accountability and the support of other believers

“Christians fight spiritual warfare by repentance, faith, and obedience” (Powlison).