



What Is Spiritual Warfare?

Basics of the Reformed Faith

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Page design by Tobias Design

Printed in the United States of America

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Gale, Stanley D., 1953–

What is spiritual warfare? / Stanley D. Gale.

p. cm. — (Basics of the Reformed faith)

Includes bibliographical references.


ISBN 978-1-59638-123-0 (pbk.)

1. Spiritual warfare. 2. Reformed Church—Doctrines. I. Title.

BV4509.5.G34 2008

235'.4—dc22

2008023440



■ **Sunday morning, 6:00**—I awakened to the last day of our family vacation. Every year we look forward to our time at the New Jersey shore to spend a week at Harvey Cedars Bible Conference on Long Beach Island—meals provided, daily Bible teaching, time with friends, things for the whole family to do, wholesome and relaxed atmosphere, sun and fun on the beach. But the week’s stay was coming to its inevitable close. After the 11:00 a.m. worship service our family would head home with all the other revelers to return to the rigors of real life.

I decided to take the half-mile stroll from our restored Victorian hotel to the ocean. The unseasonably crisp day, especially for early August, reigned spectacular with its brilliant sun and bright blue, cloudless sky—a banquet for the senses.

As I walked, I took it all in, enjoying sweet communion with my God. My heart swelled with awe and wonder. My thoughts filled with praise, at various points compelled to adoration, driven to confession, overflowing with thanksgiving. I reached the beach and stepped over the crest of the sand dunes. That’s when the sensory stimulation reached overload. The vast ocean spread out before me, the radiance of the sun magnified in reflection off its surface.

■ Spiritual Warfare

Sometimes the ocean can be restless, even violent, its waters gray and ominous, the surf raging with fury. Not today. The ocean rested as placid as I had ever seen it, the waters tranquil, generating waves no greater than the bay on the west side of the barrier island on which we stayed. A couple of beachcombers preceded my arrival, but their presence only contributed to the serenity of the scene. I gave glory to God as the Maker of the sea and all that is in it. To look upon it all, anyone would think there was not a care or worry in the world.

Appearances can be deceiving.

SEEING THE UNSEEN

A biblical worldview informs us that there is more to life than meets the eye. Contrary to a naturalistic worldview that denies the supernatural and insists on reality being limited to sensory data, a vast realm of the unseen exists, a spiritual realm, where things are happening right now as you read these words. This realm is not some sort of science fiction parallel universe but an actual part of God's created order. We acknowledge the existence of the unseen realm every time we take the words of the Nicene Creed to our lips: "one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible."

Occupying and active in this realm are angelic beings, involved in doings affecting the world in which we live, all by God's design, operating at God's appointment. Angels are creatures, not in the sense of something grotesque or menacing, but creatures as in created beings. God created two types of beings, angelic and human, both possessing