

## CHAPTER 21

### The Use of Spiritual Power

The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ (2 Cor. 10:4, 5).

Having discussed cultural principles involved in communicating the Gospel to Muslims, it is now time to explore the spiritual dimensions of this missionary challenge. In one sense, our problem is not Muslims. They are the candidates for God's love. They are the prisoners of systems and the powers behind them. Jesus came "to proclaim freedom for the captives and release ... for the prisoners ..." (Isa. 61:1). We are in a spiritual war for the souls of Muslim men and women everywhere. Islam itself is our challenge. It is a cluster of ideologies and worldviews that have bound Muslims in a dark, spiritual bondage and denied them the glorious liberty they could have through new birth in Jesus Christ and life in the Spirit.

#### The Anti-Christian Spirit of Islam

At the outset of this chapter I need to state that I believe there is a deep spiritual aspect to our Christian encounter with Islam. Although only a small percentage of Muslims may be Orthodox, the anti-Christian ideas in Islam have become so pervasive that they predispose Muslims everywhere to resist the preaching of the Gospel. Furthermore, I believe that there is a spiritual intelligence and power behind this resistance. Satan's great desire is to thwart God in reaching and recovering lost human beings through the Gospel of Jesus Christ. In earlier pages we discussed how Muhammad taught that God could not have a Son, how God could not become a man, that no one could

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die for anyone else, that Jesus was not crucified, and that if one's good deeds (one's obedience to Islamic laws) outweighed one's bad deeds, that person would go to a sensuous "paradise," otherwise to a frightening hell. We saw how Muhammad, his companions and their successors built a system called Islam which is guarded by rules and which uses the lure of sensuous rewards and threats of a gruesome hell to bind Muslims to itself. No one may leave that system on pain of death (Q. 4:89). The worldwide notoriety given to author Salman Rushdie, who had the death sentence pronounced against him by the late Ayatollah Khomeini of Iran, is a case in point (*Los Angeles Times*, February 14, 1989).

I also believe that in non-Orthodox forms of Islam, spiritual "powers" are at work, whether they be in Sufism, Folk Islam, or any other sect. For behind each one of the varieties of Islam is the spirit that is attempting to prevent Muslims from ever learning who Christ really is or why they need Him.

Islam is virulently anti-Christian at its core. It is a stronghold of error which uses arguments which directly contradict everything God has achieved through Christ for the salvation of all humankind, including Muslims. This is not to deny that there is reflected truth in the Quran, for Muhammad, in using the sources he did, got secondhand some of the biblical concepts about God, though not all. But it is to say that Muhammad built a system wholly opposed to God as Father, Son and Spirit; that Islam is opposed to the spread of the Good News of salvation through the preaching of Jesus Christ as the Son of God, crucified, dead, and risen. In its attack on the great work of Christ, the Son of God, Islam is a "pretension that sets itself up against the very knowledge of God (2 Cor. 10:5), and as such, Christ, with His spiritual power working through the truth we proclaim, will ultimately demolish it. Since Islam is not built on the foundation of Jesus Christ, it will be burned up in the testing fires of God (1 Cor. 3:11-14).

Because of its unusual hostility to the Gospel of Jesus Christ, we have to conclude that behind the system of Islam is a supernatural anti-Christian power. In the Scripture we read: "For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and

against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms" (Eph. 6:12). We believe that these powers are behind the system of doctrine that so powerfully works against the Gospel. Note the following points of attack on the Christian faith and movement:

- The Quran itself denies the crucifixion, the central event of Christ's life (Q. 4:157).
- Muhammad, failing to win Christians, cursed them (Q. 9:30).
- Muhammad reduced Jesus to being merely a prophet and then proclaimed himself the "Seal of the Prophets" (Q. 33:40).
- Islam, in the century after Muhammad, vehemently attacked the Word of God and falsely charged that it has been altered at every point where it disagreed with the Quran (Abdiyah Akbar Abdul-Haqg 1980:38).
- Islam is committed to world conquest by every means, including force (*jihad*) (Q. 8:38, 39).
- All Christians, according to Islam, are destined to be ruled by Muslims and to pay the humiliating poll tax (*jizyah*) (Q. 9:29).
- Any Muslim who becomes a Christian is to be killed (Q. 4:89).
- Saudi Arabia, the heartland of Islam, will allow no churches to be built, nor congregations to freely meet.
- Church buildings may not even be repaired in Egypt without government permission, which is seldom, if ever, given.
- In Muslim countries where *Shariah* Law has been imposed, Christians are not allowed to preach the Gospel to Muslims.

### The Shift to a Biblical Worldview

The phenomena of Folk Islam in the lives of millions of Punjabis among whom I lived for eighteen years in Pakistan caused me to search for biblical explanations. Day after day, we witnessed hundreds, sometimes thousands, going to shrines,



holy men, for healing, guidance, protection from evil, power against enemies, deliverance from demonic oppression, knowledge about the future, fertility, blessings on flocks and fields, prayers for rain, in short, help for facing all of the problems of everyday living. The element of the supernatural pervaded their whole way of dealing with their problems. This led to a re-evaluation of secularly-influenced assumptions, namely, that propositional statements of truth are all that matter—that the supernatural phenomena we observed in Folk Islam were just harmless, superstitious ideas.

For a person not accustomed to this kind of thinking, especially those who have embraced a secular worldview from any part of the world, it is a shock to learn that there really are spirit beings who can do what the Punjabis and many others in that part of the world believe. Lest my Western or secularized reader think that I have “flipped out” over these phenomena, let’s remember that our secular, Westernized worldview is not a biblical one; Western or secular man has developed a worldview other than the biblical worldview. I take the position that the Western/secular worldview is in error and that the biblical explanation concerning Satan, the devil, demons, evil spirits, evil spiritual powers and authorities is a true representation of reality. To argue with this is to take issue with the entire picture of redemptive history from start to finish. For the skeptical reader, consider the following review of Scriptures.

Satan is mentioned in the Bible, starting with the fall of man in the Garden of Eden (Gen. 3) to his final disposal at the end of the age (Rev. 20). His presence is implicit throughout the entire span of human history. He waged war in heaven. Many angels joined him in the great rebellion. The forces of God, headed up by Michael, a superior spiritual being, prevailed, and Satan and his angels were cast down to the earth (Rev. 12). He was already in the Garden of Eden at the time of Adam and Eve (Gen. 3).

Job, who predates both Abraham and Moses (Kelso 1968:147), was chosen by God to go against Satan in one of the greatest spiritual duels of all time (Job 1, 2). By the time that God gave the Law to Moses (1440-1400 B.C.), people were already sacrificing their own children to demons (Deut. 32:17). Godless peo-

ple were still doing this in the days of the psalmist (Ps. 106:37). Satan was on the scene in David’s day (around 1000 B.C.) and seduced Israel by inciting David to take a census, thereby, tempting him to rely on the strength of his army rather than God (1 Chron. 21:1).

Isaiah (740-700 B.C.), after pronouncing judgment on the King of Babylon, taunts the “power” behind the throne (Lucifer, Son of the Dawn) (Isa. 14:15). Ezekiel (593-571 B.C.), after pronouncing judgment on the King of Tyre, then turns, in much the same way as Isaiah did, to make a prophecy against the “power” behind the King of Tyre. Ezekiel details Satan’s degeneration from being the “model of perfection” to being reduced to ashes and someone whose very looks are appalling, who will “come to a horrible end and will be no more” (Eze. 28:12-19). In the book of Zechariah (around 520 B.C.), Satan is pictured as standing at the right hand of Joshua, the High Priest, to accuse him (Zec. 3:1).

Satan’s activity and power are described in general terms in the two following passages: “The whole world is under the control of the evil one” (1 John 5:19), and, “The great dragon was hurled down—that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray” (Rev. 12:9). When Jesus officially began His earthly ministry, immediately following His baptism, He was driven by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by Satan (Matt. 4:1-11). Jesus’ enemies, in trying to explain His extraordinary power over demons, accused Him of being in league with the devil. Jesus’ reply to this charge is significant:

But if I drive out demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you. Or again, how can anyone enter a strong man’s house and carry off his possessions unless he first ties up the strong man? Then he can rob his house (Matt. 12:28, 29).

Implied in this answer is that Jesus had bound Satan and was looting his house, that is, liberating the prisoners, those oppressed by demons, and was setting them free. What is so note-





worthy here is that Jesus demonstrated the presence of His kingdom by His deliverance ministry. His worldview is that everyone is either a citizen of the kingdom of darkness (of Satan) or the kingdom of God. This is unlike secular thought, which maintains that all things have a rational, scientific explanation, and that no supernatural or evil person exists. Unfortunately, this idea has come into churches all over the world, with the result that Christians don't even know who or what their enemy is.

Before leaving this subject, we should take a closer look at just what power the enemy has and what he can do. The devil can sow tares among the wheat (heresy in the midst of truth) (Matt. 13:39). He can snatch the Word of God from peoples' hearts (Luke 8:12). He put the idea of betraying Jesus in Judas' heart; he ultimately entered into Judas (John 13:27). Remember that in David's day, he rose up against Israel and incited a believing king to trust in the flesh instead of God by taking a census. He raised up raiding parties to steal Job's flocks and kill his servants. He caused a mighty wind to blow and destroy the house where Job's children were feasting, killing all of them. He even had the power, by God's permission, to afflict Job with boils.

In the New Testament period, we learn demons could cause dumbness (Matt. 9:33), seizures (Matt. 17:15), give people superhuman strength, cause someone to cut himself (Mark 5:2-5), give a young girl the ability to foretell the future (fortune-telling) (Acts 16:16), and throw people to the ground, or into fire or water (Matt. 17:15). Demons could also deceive through false teaching (1 Tim. 4:1). They could haunt places (Rev. 18:2). They could be the key power and presence in pagan religious sacrifices and feasts (1 Cor. 10:20, 21). Demons have the ability to cause miraculous signs to deceive people (Rev. 16:14).

The reason for reviewing so much Scripture on this point is to counter-balance the secular worldview of the West, which denies the very existence of Satan and hierarchies of demons. Most Westerners, due to this powerful molding influence on their respective cultures, know practically nothing about spiritual warfare against these kinds of powers. Secularized Christians have to be brought back to a biblical viewpoint. One of the great ironies of the Western missionary movement is that it has been blinded by its compromise with secularism as to the reality of

demonic, even Satanic, powers working through the religious systems of the people they go to win. As often as not, the local people know more about the reality of such evil influence than the missionaries.

Charles Kraft's testimony as to what changed in his life and ministry is most informative. (Please note: As I quote from men like Kraft and others, it does not mean I fully endorse the directions their ministries have taken. Nor in the case of healing, do I advocate that all will be healed. But I do believe we have much to learn in moving from secular skepticism to a healthy belief in the Word of God, and that is why I quote from their testimonies.) This is Kraft's confession of how he was ineffective while in the throes of his secularized Christianity.

As Evangelicals, however, we were totally unprepared to deal with the one area the Nigerians considered most important—their relationships with the spirit world. Time after time Nigerians would turn our discussions to the disruption in their lives they claimed were caused by evil spirits. Such things as disease, accidents, death, the infertility of humans, animals, and fields, drought, and the disruption of relationships were all seen as the work of these evil entities (1989:3, 4).

Kraft pointed out the futility of attempting to meet Nigerian needs with the fruit of Western science:

Though we talked a great deal about spiritual things, the Nigerians understood most aspects of spirituality much better than we did. I'm afraid we were doing what Paul accuses the Galatians of doing: starting in the spirit but then turning to human power [Gal. 3:3]. In the name of Christ, as if this was the best he could offer, we had simply produced western secularized approaches to illness, accident, education, fertility, agriculture, and every other problem of life. We acted as though western scientific methods were more effective than prayer (1989:4, 5).



Later, as Kraft became a part of the awakening among evangelicals to the spiritual realities of our world and discovered that they match the situation described in Jesus' day, he wrote of the amazing paradigm shift in his worldview:

What I was experiencing was a classic "paradigm shift," a major change in perspective. I had opened myself up to the possibility of change by exposing myself to new experiences. I was turning from *skepticism to belief*... All of a sudden I was choosing to believe and behave quite differently.... I began to teach on healing in my own Sunday School class.... [A]s time went on, I developed the boldness to ask God to provide opportunities to demonstrate what I was talking about right in front of the class. On a couple of occasions, the results were dramatic (1989:53, 62).

Kraft found that this paradigm shift turned his devotional life upside down:

I find myself reading the Bible (especially the Gospels) with new eyes—knowing that miracles and deliverances and revelations from God and angels and demons and all those things I used to read about only as inspired history are for us today! I find a new desire to pray, to talk to God and to listen to him.... There is a new power and authority in ministry... (1987:133-134).

This was the end result of his newfound worldview: "It wasn't long before I was...experiencing Christianity with power for the first time in my life" (1989:8).

What was the nature of that paradigm shift? What do we need to learn from it? Basically, it was the discovery of how to use the power and authority that Christ has given His disciples from the beginning. In commissioning His disciples to go on their first evangelistic tours, Scripture says: "He called His twelve disciples to Him and gave them authority to drive out evil

spirits and to heal every disease and sickness" (Matt. 10:1). And, "He gave them power and authority to drive out all demons and to cure diseases, and He sent them out to preach the kingdom of God and to heal the sick" (Luke 9:1, 2).

I have felt it was necessary to go into this background material because so many of the potential readers of this book are probably like me. That is, they came to Christ through evangelical churches that taught power encounters like these don't happen anymore, that those experiences were only for the apostolic period. I myself have had to undergo a radical shift from anti-supernatural secularistic ideas that negated large portions of biblical teaching and rendered me ineffective in dealing with the deep spiritual dimensions of the warfare we are engaged in across the world of Islam. I had to learn to believe God for the power to discern the presence of evil spirits, to heal the sick when it was God-led, and to pray for those oppressed by demons to be delivered.

The truth is that God works the same way today as He did millennia ago. Jesus and the Spirit are the same yesterday, today and forever. The gifts and power of God's Spirit are as available today as they were in Jesus' day and were not confined to the apostolic period—they are available for all who believe and appropriate them. This issue becomes especially pointed when we struggle with Folk Islamic practices right where the people live. No demonstration of God's power on our part over the power of the enemy means no lasting fruit. Maybe there will be surface "conversions," but in the absence of knowing how to deal with the demonic power that may have affected the would-be believer (even having been taught by the missionary that they don't exist), the potential convert may never learn how to escape the grip of the evil powers that hold him. The missionary, then, is completely mystified as to why his "converts" cannot stand.

In discussing spiritual warfare let us remember that the underlying struggle for the loyalty of the human race is ultimately between Christ and Satan, between the kingdom of God's dear Son and the kingdom of darkness. The Muslims are not our enemy; the mastermind who inspired the system that enslaved them is. Therefore, we go forth in Jesus' name, proclaiming the



truth of the Gospel, healing and delivering from demonic oppression. These acts of love manifest the presence and power of the King over the power of the enemy in this world as well as in eternity.

Perhaps none has spelled out the implications of this truth more eloquently and comprehensively than Don Williams:

The shattering, life-changing news of the Bible is that the King who rules this kingdom both sustains our world from heaven and decisively and irrevocably invades it in the incarnation of His Son who bears His dynamic Spirit. What this means for us is that our lives can and must be changed now. While we may routinely pray, "Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven," God is actually answering this prayer throughout our world as He manifests His kingdom reign. Thus, He is releasing His Holy Spirit in power, opening hearts to His lively presence, healing wounds past and present, breaking compulsive, addictive behavior, and elevating the poor into His presence by expelling our present darkness and recreating our fallen humanity. We have the unique opportunity to experience this kingdom by faith and to see it personally intersect our lives before we are catapulted into eternity where both faith and unbelief will become sight, either to our joy or to our horror (1989:2).

Williams, whose eyes were opened to the reality of God's miraculous working in the present, later went into great detail pointing out the powerful impact secular, anti-supernatural philosophical views had on molding his quasi-Christian worldview.

### **Is the Collapse of Islam Possible? An Analogy from the Fall of Communism**

Atheistic communism set out to obliterate the Christian faith and failed. Jesus, in speaking of Himself said: "Then what

is the meaning of that which is written: 'The stone the builders rejected has become the capstone. Everyone who falls on that stone will be broken to pieces, but he on whom it falls will be crushed'" (Luke 20:17, 18). One interpretation of this means that whoever falls in worship before Jesus will have his sinful pride broken, but whoever refuses Jesus will be crushed beyond recovery. Today, we are seeing this happen in the former Soviet Union. A nation that vowed it would exalt atheism and crush the Church is now being crushed itself. Many feel that it was the Church in the Soviet Bloc (even Eastern Europe) that brought communism down.

Before we continue, let me state that I believe in the genuineness and reliability of the Bible as it is today. I believe the following pillars of Christian faith: that the very heart of God's great redemptive acts in offering salvation to mankind is wrapped up in His becoming a man (John 1:14), that Jesus is the express representation of God on earth (Heb. 1:3), that Christ died on the cross for us and we are justified by His blood and saved from the wrath to come through Him (Rom. 5:8, 9), that He was buried and rose again the third day according to the Scriptures (1 Cor. 15:4), that there is salvation in no other name (Acts 4:12), that to reject Him is to reject God Himself (1 John 2:23), and finally that whoever denies the Son, as the Scripture states so clearly, is an antichrist (1 John 2:22).

For any Muslim who may read this, please note that I am quoting Scripture, and that as a believer, this is not a question of my private opinion; it is being faithful to the revealed Word of God. If you have an objection to these cardinal redemptive acts of God in Christ, your basic quarrel is with God Himself, not with me. I am simply His faithful witness.

I have felt it necessary to restate the Scriptural position for the benefit of Muslim readers so they will understand why we perceive their religion the way we do. Again, let me repeat, so there is no misunderstanding: God loves Muslims. So do we. Christ died for Muslims. We give our lives in attempting to bring salvation to Muslims. Muslims are precious in God's sight and in ours. The problem is the religious system that binds them, even blinds them, and, in general, works to keep Muslims from finding salvation in Christ.



Muslims should not only take warning from the illustration of communism's fall, but even more from the Scriptures themselves. The system to which they belong has set itself against God's Anointed One. On the surface, Islam appears to honor Jesus, but in reality, it is utterly opposed to the heart of the Gospel and is therefore doomed. Listen to David's prophecy against all who would take their stand against the Son of God:

The One enthroned in heaven laughs; the Lord scoffs at them. Then He rebukes them in His anger and terrifies them in His wrath, saying, "I have installed my King on Zion, my holy hill." (Ps. 2:4-6) [This was ultimately fulfilled in Jesus.]

I will proclaim the decree of the Lord. He said to me, "You are my Son; today I have become your Father. Ask of Me, and I will make the nations Your inheritance, the ends of the earth Your possession. You will rule them with an iron scepter; You will dash them to pieces like pottery." (Ps. 2:7-9)

Therefore, you kings, be wise; be warned, you rulers of the earth. Serve the Lord with fear and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest He be angry and you be destroyed in your way for His wrath can flare up in a moment. Blessed are all who take refuge in Him (Ps. 2:10-12).

We know the outcome of this war, for Islam does see itself at war with all other systems until they are "properly subdued." Daniel prophesied long ago what would happen to all kingdoms that oppose the kingdom of God with Christ as the rightful King:

In the time of those kings [Caesar and Herod, who ruled when Jesus was born], the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed, nor will it be left to another people. It will crush all those kingdoms and bring them to an end, but it will itself endure forever (Dan. 2:44).

The apostle Paul, in his inspired writing, wrote about end times in which Jesus Christ, as the Son of God, will subdue all of God's enemies:

Then the end will come, when He hands over the kingdom to God the Father after He has destroyed all dominion, authority and power. For He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet.... When He has done this, then the Son Himself will be made subject to Him who put everything under Him, so that God may be all in all (1 Cor. 15:24, 25, 28).

The Bible closes with a magnificent series of pictures of the warfare and the victory of Christ over all enemies: "[T]he kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ, and He will reign for ever and ever" (Rev. 11:15). It is comforting to the Christian worker to know that the final outcome is sure. Jesus is the legitimate King. All rivals are to be vanquished. Truth will win over error. Righteousness will be the hallmark of His kingdom. Men of the earth will oppress and terrorize no more, and Satan himself will receive his final judgment and be cast away to deceive no more.

We know that Christ won each of His decisive battles with Satan, beginning with His initial confrontation in the wilderness (Matt. 4:1-11), again in the Garden of Gethsemane as He approached His final test (Matt. 26:36-46), and finally, when He died voluntarily on the cross in our place (Col. 2:13-15), by which He conquered sin and Satan. When He arose from the grave, He also conquered death. We need to avail ourselves of the comfort and strength that comes from the great victory. But even though Jesus has won, the war is not over. There are many battles still to be fought: there will still be many casualties and many martyrs before we finish the work He left for us to do.

He has asked us to disciple the nations—all of the thousands of ethnolinguistic groups in the world. We are to go in His name, preach the Gospel, set the prisoners free, heal the sick, cast out demons, expand the borders of His Church and trample Satan underfoot (Rom. 16:20). In this titanic struggle, we are to



prevail over the enemy, we are to demolish his strongholds and arguments, and "every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God" (2 Cor. 10:3-5). I believe that ultimately this will mean that Muslims will be set free from their system and brought back to God their Father through the Gospel of His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ.

### The Place of Prayer

Returning to our discussion of the collapse of communism, let us examine the place of prayer in that event. Christians in the Soviet Union suffered enormously under dictators like Stalin, Khruschev, Breznev, Chernenko and Andropov. The same could be said of all the Eastern European countries, Vietnam, North Korea, Cuba, and others. Throughout the rule of all of these oppressive regimes, Christians inside and outside of these countries prayed. The big question is "Did God move as He did in response to those prayers?" My answer is "Yes." The answer took more than fifty years, but what we are seeing today is a result of the faithful prayers of God's people.

When Jesus taught His disciples to pray, among the requests were the following: "Your kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven..." and, "deliver us from the evil one" (Matt. 6:10, 13). By asking the Father to bring in His kingdom and for His will to be done on earth, we, in a sense, release God to do what He is longing to do. When we ask to be delivered from the evil one, we are acknowledging that "the whole world is under the control of the evil one" (1 John 5:19), and that God, who is in us, is greater than the one who is in the world (1 John 4:4), and can deliver us.

Furthermore, we see how God gave Peter the insight to appropriate a theme from the Mosaic Law and apply it to all believers today: "But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood..." (1 Peter 2:9). As royal priests, we are to bear before God petitions for the nations. Look at the way Paul also wrote on the same theme:

I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone—for kings and all those in authority, that we

may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. This is good, and pleases God our Savior, who wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth (1 Tim. 2:1-4).

God's desire is to see all men saved. He has given us the privilege of intercessory prayer for all men and for their rulers.

We see this so vividly illustrated in the life of Moses. Because of their sin, God was about to destroy the Israelites. Moses staked his life on his intercession for his people: "Please forgive their sin—but if not, then blot me out of the book You have written" (Ex. 32:32). Moses would rather forfeit his life than see his people lost. We need this kind of groaning—this quality of deep intercession that springs out of the groaning of God's Spirit (Rom. 8:26). Who knows? God may bring Muslims out of their bondage to Islam.

Prayer warriors of the spirit of Abraham, Moses, David, Nehemiah, Peter and Paul are needed. Prayer warriors who take the teaching and example of our Lord Jesus to heart. People who will ask God for the Muslim nations of the world, country by country, and ethnolinguistic group by ethnolinguistic group. Prayer is perhaps the mightiest weapon we have in this spiritual warfare for the salvation of the Muslim peoples of the world.

But there are other aspects and dimensions of this war of liberation for setting the Muslim peoples free from the restraints of Islam.

### Signs and Wonders in the Kingdom

Jesus came to invite people to leave the kingdom of darkness and to enter the kingdom of God. He came in love and compassion. In His tour of Galilee, for example, He preached the Good News of the kingdom and healed every disease and sickness (Matt. 9:35). His was to be a kingdom of love—for He is love (1 John 4:8). Scripture says that when He saw the crowds He was moved with compassion. How do you show compassion? How do you manifest your love? The most immediate and vexing problem a human being can have is personal illness, a debilitating disease, or even worse, being afflicted with demons. Jesus' response to these very visible needs was always one of compas-



sion. Wherever He went He healed people from their sicknesses and delivered those oppressed by evil spirits. Not only did Jesus demonstrate the power of God in this way, He also empowered His disciples to do the same by giving "them power and authority to drive out all demons and to cure diseases, and He sent them out to preach the kingdom of God and to heal the sick" (Luke 9:1, 2).

In the above quote, Jesus linked healing and deliverance with the preaching of the kingdom of God. Healing seemed to be the evidence of the presence of the kingdom. Later, Jesus gave the same authority to thirty-six teams which He had appointed to go before Him and prepare the places He was about to visit. What is so very interesting in this last reference is that Jesus linked this to the harvest:

The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into His harvest field.... When you enter a town and are welcomed, eat what is set before you. Heal the sick who are there and tell them, "The kingdom of God is near you" (Luke 10:2, 8, 9).

Jesus' response to the elation and joy of the returning teams was most revealing. Instead of rejoicing at this evidence of the relief of human suffering, He saw far beyond to the ultimate undoing of the enemy who caused it all: "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy" (Luke 10:18, 19). Jesus was the one who opened His disciples eyes as to who the real enemy was. Therefore, John was able to write: "We know ... that the whole world is under the control of the evil one" (1 John 5:19). And it was John who articulated so succinctly the purpose of Jesus' coming: "The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work" (1 John 3:8).

### Power Encounter in Muslim Work

In our work with Muslims, it is inevitable that we will encounter power, for Islam itself is about power. Although there

are many references to mercy and compassion in the Quran, the overriding impression of God in that book is one of irresistible power. Some Muslims see themselves as the instruments of that power—for example, Muslim *mujahidin* (holy warriors) commissioned to impose that Quranic "will of God" upon the whole world—by force, if necessary. In Islam there is no place for incarnation, suffering love and redemption. These are contrary to Muhammad's concept of divine sovereignty and the use of force (Cragg 1984:137). Islam's power is the power of force, of fear, of persecution, of economic discrimination, of the control of the media, of the denial of visas, of the effort to drive Christian presence out from its borders and to frustrate the birth of any new movement among its populace.

For the Christian, forgiveness and healing are inextricably linked to Jesus' death on the cross (Isa. 53:4-6; 1 Peter 2:24). His conquest of Satan was possible because of His conquest of Hossin (John 14:30). His conquest of death was by the Spirit of Holiness whereby He was declared to be the Son of God (Rom. 1:4). His pouring out of the Holy Spirit upon us was to manifest the Good News of God's great redemptive work in Christ (Acts 1:8). This Good News of God's kingdom is to be testified to by God Himself through "signs, wonders and various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to His will" (Heb. 2:4). As the true kingdom of God invades the world of Islam, its hallmarks should be the love of God and the power of God expressed in forgiveness of sins, healings, deliverances from demonic oppression, and other signs and wonders. This is a different kind of power—the power to minister to human needs. It stands forth in great contrast to Islam which has none of this kind of power or certification from God.

The Bible tells us that Satan knows his time is short: "But woe to the earth and the sea, because the devil has gone down to you! He is filled with fury, because he knows that his time is short" (Rev. 12:12). Even though Satan knows that he is a defeated enemy, he is going to vent his fury on Christ and those who identify with Him, that is, the Christians. He will use whatever weapons, people, ideology, or religion that he can control and direct toward his hated enemy, Christ. Because of its anti-Christian nature, we can expect vigorous opposition from Islam



and all of its varieties, especially as the Gospel successfully encroaches on Satan's domain.

Truly, Christ sends us forth as sheep among wolves (Matt. 23:16). We may not use earthly weapons. Humanly speaking, we are defenseless against such an enemy. But spiritually, we have the privilege of prayer. Angels come to our assistance in response to those prayers (Dan. 10:4-11; Heb. 1:14). We also have the Word of God in our hands, that word which is called "The Sword of the Spirit" (Eph. 6:17). And, of course, in that Word is the blessed Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, which is described as "the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes..." (Rom. 1:16). This Word is also called "truth" (John 17:17), and Jesus explained that it is the "truth" that would set people free. And finally, we have our sovereign God Himself who lives in us and fights for us, delivering us from all the power of the enemy (Luke 10:19). In seeking to win Muslims to Christ, then, we need to use the mighty weapons and the power that Christ makes available to us. He Himself is our strength, He responds to our prayers, He empowers us to heal and deliver the prisoners from Satan's power. We are exhorted to demolish "strongholds...arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God..." (2 Cor. 10:4, 5). In the end, Islam cannot stand, for it is utterly opposed to God's anointed Savior, Jesus Christ, the King. Let us, then, avail ourselves of His presence and power as we set about recovering the prisoners.