

# THE SEEN AND THE UNSEEN WAR



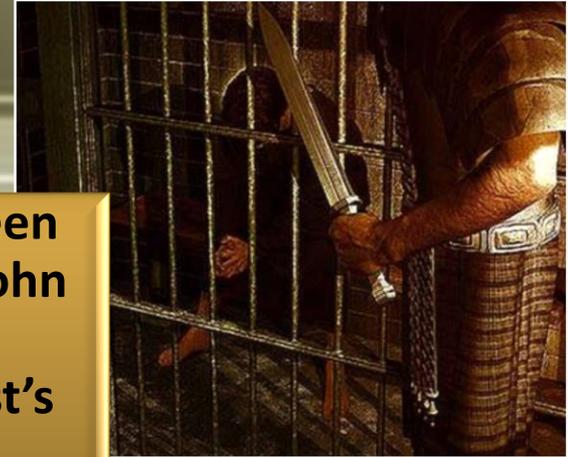
Lesson 5 for April 30, 2016

**There is a war between unseen powers in the Bible that is depicted in the book of Matthew too. That war sometimes becomes visible. This week we studied:**

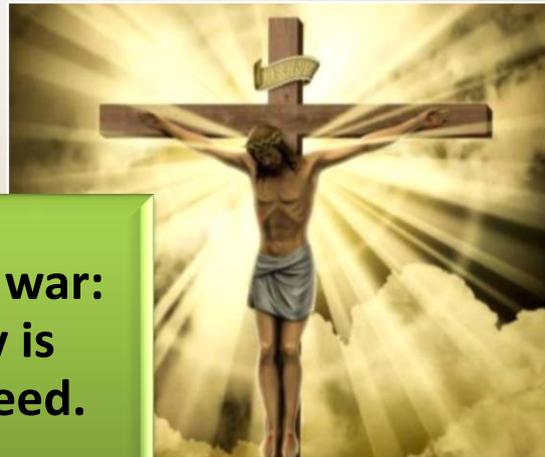
**The unseen war: Satan against Christ.**



**The seen war: John the Baptist's case.**

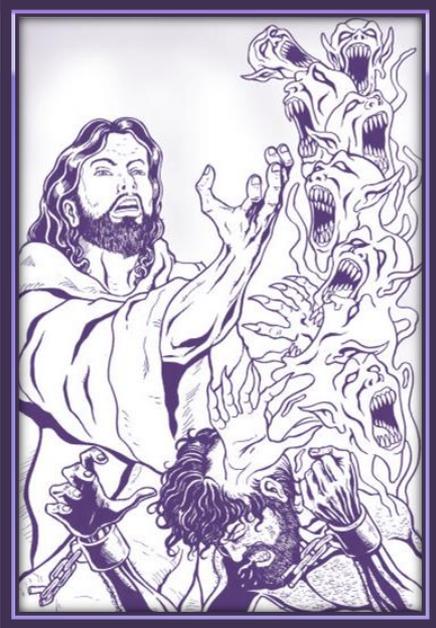


**The won war: Victory is guaranteed.**



# THE UNSEEN WAR

**"We know that we are of God, and the whole world lies under the sway of the wicked one." (1 John 5:19)**



**Jesus was accused of healing by the power of "Beelzebub, the ruler of the demons." Jesus took the opportunity to talk about the war between two kingdoms, God's and the Devil's (Matthew 12:24-30).**

**Those two kingdoms are real, although we cannot see them. Our problem is that we are currently living in enemy territory.**

**We belong to God's kingdom, we're on Christ's side. Therefore, "we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but... against spiritual hosts of wickedness." (Ephesians 6:12).**



# THE SEEN WAR

“And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force.” (Matthew 11:12)



After being imprisoned, John sent two disciples to ensure Jesus was actually the Messiah.

Jesus showed His “Messianic credentials” to the disciples and encouraged John to trust Him. He didn’t offer to deliver him from prison. Then, Jesus praised John before His audience.

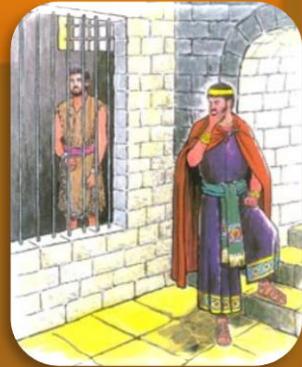
The greatest prophet couldn’t enjoy the Kingdom of Heaven that Jesus was preaching because he was imprisoned; others did. That’s why Jesus said, “he who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he [is more privileged than John].” (Matthew 11:11).

# THE SEEN WAR

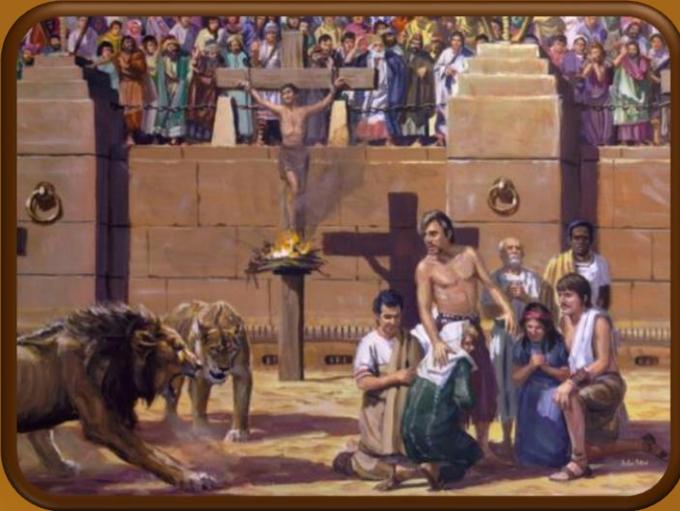
“And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force.” (Matthew 11:12)

Jesus ended his speech about John by saying the enigmatic words in Matthew 11:12. What did Jesus mean?

Let's compare how those sentence was translated into English in different versions of the Bible:



“And from the time John the Baptist began preaching until now, the Kingdom of Heaven has been forcefully advancing, and violent people are attacking it.” (NLT)



“From the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven has suffered violence, and forceful people lay hold of it.” (NET)



The Greek verb *βιαζεται* (*biazetai*) can mean either “forcefully advancing” or “suffering violence.”

The Greek word *βιασται* (*biastai*) can mean either “forceful or eager men” or “violent men.”

We can interpret that verse in different ways by combining those translations:



Forcefully  
advancing

Forceful men

Believers who are strongly  
convinced make the Kingdom  
advance forcefully

Violent men

The Kingdom advances forcefully,  
but violent men stop it

Suffering  
violence

Forceful men

The Kingdom suffers violence and  
only those with strong conviction  
can reach it

Violent men

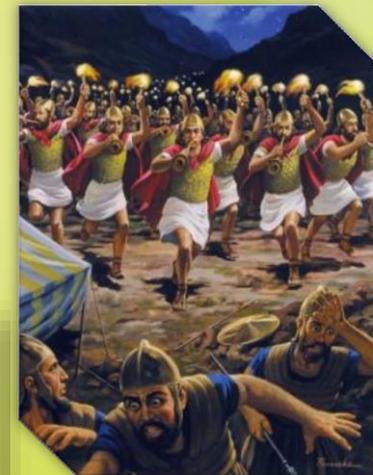
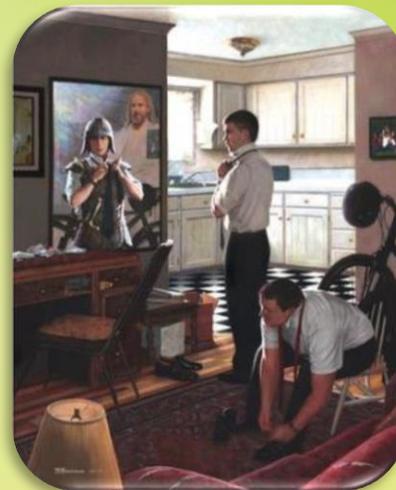
The Kingdom suffers violence from  
violent men

No matter how we interpret that verse, something's certain: There's a real war and we are involved.

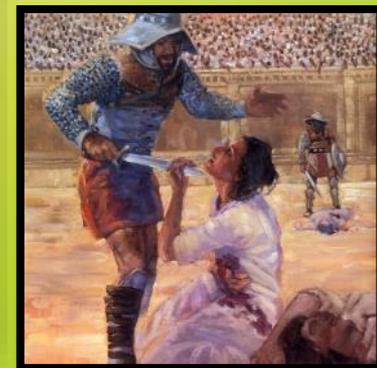
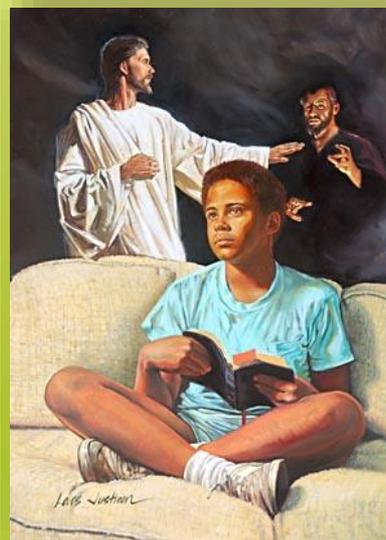
The story of John the Baptist is another chapter in this war.

We are living chapters of this war too. Being faithful to King Jesus has never been easy on this Earth.

There are battles of this war taking place in our hearts daily. The enemy threatens to influence our decisions and our acts.



“Do not think that I came to bring peace on earth. I did not come to bring peace but a sword.”  
(Matthew 10:34)

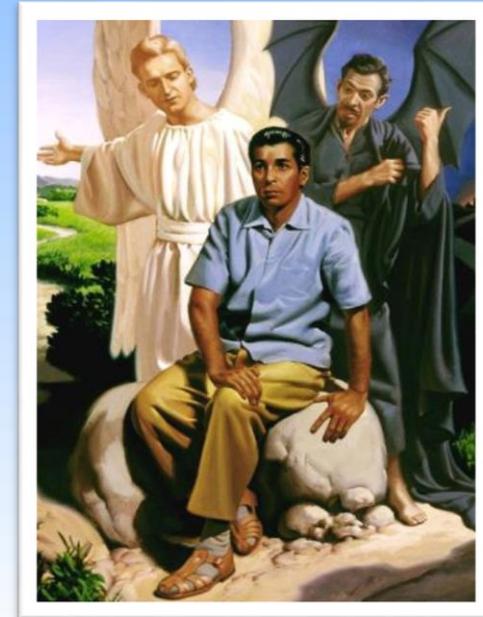
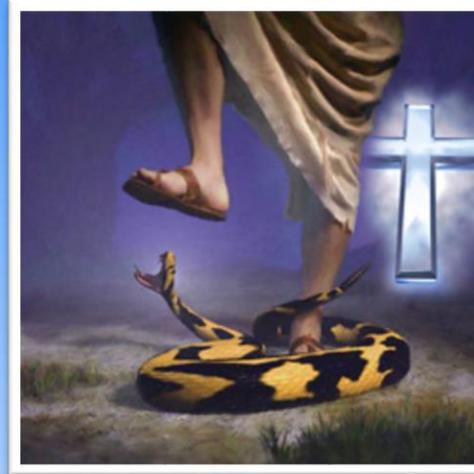


# THE WON WAR

**“Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil.” (Hebrews 2:14)**

**The end of this war was determined at the cross. Jesus’ victory was absolute. Satan is a defeated prince.**

**He is aware of that, so he “has come down [...] having great wrath, because he knows that he has a short time.” (Rev. 12:12). He is a “roaring lion” (1P. 5:8) that can still hurt us.**



**He uses subtle temptations to steal our loyalty and makes us lose the eternal Kingdom.**

**The key question is: Which side are you on?**



**“The temptations of Satan present earthly things and make them all-absorbing and attractive, so that the heavenly realities are eclipsed and the attachment to the world made first; and this has become so great a power that Omnipotence alone can dislodge it. Satan’s work is to chain the senses to this world. Christ came to break the satanic enchantment, counterwork the work of Satan, and charm the mind away from the earthly to the heavenly. He alone is able to break the enchantment...**

**With eternal realities in view we will habitually cultivate thoughts of the presence of God. This will be a shield against the incoming of the enemy.”**