



**For a health issue, what might the spiritual side look like?
What might the physical part be?**

This account creates a strong precedent that weapons like prayer and weapons like medical science are not mutually exclusive, but rather have the same symbiotic relationship found between Moses' arms and the troupes on the ground.



Negative Side.

Some people are quite weary of the battle metaphor. They feel it is irredeemably violent and creates a wrong, adversarial way of looking at things.



Do you agree – disagree?

Are there dangers in seeing things as a battle?

Are there things that we should not think of as a battle?



It is a bible metaphor, both in the First Testament and the New Testament. This is not to say we should apply it to every circumstance. (God is more than a rock). Certainly, for a lot of situations we face, there are much better metaphors.

If you are having an argument with your husband or wife, is it safe to see them as the enemy?



The Divine Warrior

"The Lord is a warrior; the Lord is His name." – Exodus 15:3

"It is God who arms me with strength and keeps my way secure." – Psalm 18:32

"For the Lord your God is the one who goes with you to fight for you against your enemies to give you victory." – Deuteronomy 20:4

While Samuel was sacrificing the burnt offering, the Philistines drew near to engage Israel in battle. But that day the LORD thundered with loud thunder against the Philistines and threw them into such a panic that they were routed before the Israelites. 1 Samuel 7:10 NIB



Behind the Exodus 17 battle is a very important biblical idea. God is a warrior. In every battle there is an unseen soldier, one who fights on behalf of His people. It is His presence that causes victory and His absence defeat. A bigger danger is that through our actions we might find that He is not fighting for us but against us!

Victory does not ultimately depend on how skilled you are at fighting, the number of you troupes, the quality of their weapons, or even your strategy; it depends on the presence of the Divine Warrior.



How does this work in our battles?

How will you make sure the Divine Warrior is fighting with you?



Recap

Above, you were asked what weapons we have. It is a very long list. Now you have finished the study and had time to think.

What weapons are there that we missed?



Moses built an altar and called it The LORD is my Banner. He said, 'Because hands were lifted up against the throne of the LORD, the LORD will be at war against the Amalekites from generation to generation.' Exodus 17:15-18:1

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The Battle



Read Exodus 17:8-13

The Bible, especially the First Testament, is full of battles. People fighting against Israel and Israel fighting against other nations. This was a symptom of the time and the geopolitical world they lived in. For that matter, war is still a part of human experience.

All those gathered here will know that it is not by sword or spear that the LORD saves; for the battle is the LORD's, and he will give all of you into our hands! 1 Samuel 17:47



What is your favourite bible battle story?

When was the last time you fought a battle?

We do not fight physical battles; most of us do not have a sword, shield, or spear stored in our wardrobe. For them, the battles were physical and literal; for us, they are spiritual and metaphorical.



What is a metaphor?

"A figure of speech in which a word or phrase is applied to an object or action that it does not literally denote in order to imply a resemblance."



For example

My car is a...

The Lord is my...

Shepherd, rock, fortress, shield, father, etc.



Each of these uses a term that is not literally true in order to convey truth. The Lord is not a rock, but He is like a rock. They contrast with terms like The Lord is my hope, my salvation, my God; which are literally true and not metaphors. You could argue that Shepherd and Father fit somewhere between the two.

The Bible loves metaphors (similes and metonymies). This is especially true in biblical poetry. Metaphors add texture to literature; they make passages more beautiful and fun to read. They engage the reader.

More importantly, they make us see and think about things differently. Metaphors work because they make us compare two different things that don't normally go together. They make us ask the question: In what way is this comparison true, and in what way is it not true? Metaphors, because they are metaphors, are by nature limited.



What do you know about rocks?

In what way is God like a rock?

In what way is God not like a rock?



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The biggest issue here is that God is more than a rock. The metaphor explains one aspect of God's nature but not the whole.



What did it mean for the children of Israel to go to battle?

What were the risks?

What hardships were involved?

What were the possible outcomes?

What were the consequences of defeat?

What were the consequences of victory?

How do you think they felt about it?



The Israelites trained for battle from a young age. They had no choice. They were organised by tribe, clan and family. This means they fought next to their brothers, uncles and cousins. This would have made war a very different thing from fighting next to strangers. Loss could mean harm or slavery for their families. It would also have financial implications. The loss of wealth and food, and the need to pay tribute, part of each subsequent crop to the enemy. Victory would bring wealth and security for the nation and family. For them, it was kill or be killed. Winning or losing were not the only possible outcomes; stalemate also happened, along with cold peace.



The Battle Metaphor

What things in your life might you describe as a battle?



Health	Finances
depression	Sin
habits	bad personality traits
Keeping your temper	Dealing with difficult people
resisting temptation	family dramas

Over and above all this is spiritual warfare. Recognising where the enemy is at work in our lives or the lives of those around us and countering it.



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. Ephesians 6:12 NIB

Fundamentally, what enemies do we have?

Satan	Self	evil
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For most of us, this metaphor rolls off the tongue. We talk about something as a battle. We are doing poetry, explaining what something feels like, giving expression to our emotions. But metaphors are intended to help us see a situation in a different way, so it might be worth taking seriously the idea that this is a battle.

In our battles, what are the possible outcomes?

What are the risks for us?

What are the gains open to us?



If you take this metaphor seriously, how will it change the way you see a situation?

Hopefully it makes you think more seriously about consequences. It should also make you think about strategy: how do I win this battle? And the different weapons that you have available to fight with.



Temptation

Let's take temptation as an example. Any temptation.

What weapons do you have?

The Ancient world took espionage and reconnaissance as seriously as any modern army. The 12 spies of Numbers 13 and the 2 of Joshua 2 were the rule, not the exception. (Interestingly, the route through which the spies entered the land, to the north, was noticeably different from the route they finally took, to the west.)



In our battles, what might intelligence look like?

What might strategy look like?



Afterwards, the prophet came to the king of Israel and said, 'Strengthen your position and see what must be done, because next spring the king of Aram will attack you again.' 1 Kings 20:22

The Israelites knew that almost every year they would face war. So they prepared and planned for it.



If you know that having just overcome temptation, next week you will be tempted again.

What will you do?

If you have a battle and you don't have a strategy, you are in trouble.



The man of God sent word to the king of Israel: 'Beware of passing that place, because the Arameans are going down there.' 2 Kings 6:9

In the passage that we read at the start, how was the battle won?

You will notice that there were both physical and spiritual actions taken. Moses' actions on the hill would have been of no good if the soldiers in the valley had just stood there. Both were needed.

You will also note that there was strategy involved: the choice of the best men, not the whole army, the hill and the staff.



How do you think that Moses knew what to do?

How might this help you?

You might also realise that no other battle in the bible was fought this way.

What does that tell us about the strategies and weapons?

Of the very many different weapons at our disposal, we will use a limited number in each battle. Different battles require different strategies and different weapons. There are as many battle strategies in the Bible as there are battles.

What do you think Moses holding his hands aloft represented?



A Health Problem.

In what way might you describe this as a battle?

What weapons will you use?

What strategy will you use?

What intelligence will you need?

Exodus 17 might have something additional to tell us here. If both physical and spiritual actions were needed to win the battle.