

# Warring Psalms

by Nancy Blatnik and Linda-Jean Jay

©2004 Liberating Ministries for Christ International

As God's children and loyal heirs of His kingdom, Christians today enjoy a unique position within the Lord's army. We are the duly-authorized officers who voice the commands initiated in heaven by the Godhead. Through the leading of the Holy Spirit, we "trumpet forth" the will of the Lord into the senses realm. At times this will involve speaking words familiar to our understanding, while at other times speaking in tongues will accomplish the transmission of directives to angelic forces.

Our application of this truth is fresh and formidable, yet the reality of mankind and angelic warriors working together is well documented in the Word of God. The Scriptures contain a wealth of information for the Christian soldier's education and training concerning spiritual warfare.

Christians need to be re-educated on the subject of spiritual warfare, but not merely regarding the weapons of our warfare. They must especially be educated concerning a godly attitude of aggression against God's enemies. Judges 3:1 and 2 tells us how God wants us to be trained and taught.

*Now these are the nations which the LORD left, to prove Israel by them, even as many of Israel as had not known all the wars of Canaan; Only that the generations of the children of Israel might know, to teach them war, at least such as before knew nothing thereof.*  
~Judges 3:1-2 KJV

God uses our enemies to prove us. He not only wants to know of the love and compassion we have for others, He also wants to know if we have the resolute heart of David, Elijah, Jonathan, or Samson. He expects us to be taught how to war and how to engage the enemy. Don't you think He keenly observes how aggressively we defend the "family name" or offensively engage enemies of the cross?

Likewise, we need to prove ourselves before the Lord. He wants to see if we will honor Him and His commandments, and He wants to see if we are worthy to reign with Him in His coming kingdom. Those who keep His words and carry out His orders until the end will be given the reward of reigning with Him as kings on the earth during His millennial reign (Revelation 2:25-27).

First of all, we must acknowledge that we have been born into a spiritual conflict that has been raging since Lucifer was expelled from heaven. Next we must realize that our enemies are not flesh and blood, but evil spiritual forces who are opposing the Lord's kingdom and purposes in the earth.

*For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.* ~Ephesians 6:12

As New Testament believers, we should be well aware that our warfare is not against people. There is a spiritual warfare that we are all involved in whether we know it or not. In order to subdue the forces of darkness as instructed by our Commander-in-Chief, we must gain instruction and training.

What better training can we receive than that which God has already given us in His Scriptures? The prime biblical manual specifically for warfare (and worship) is the Book of Psalms. It was penned by the worshiping warrior, King David.

Proclamations of warfare are common throughout these beautifully written songs, and many of them are saturated with curses against the enemies of God. While some may tend to shy away from the imprecatory (cursing) Psalms, it behooves us to recognize that these are included in the God-breathed Word for a purpose.

*All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work. ~2 Timothy 3:16–17*

The “all scripture” here refers not only to the New Testament, but the Old as well. Romans 15:4 tells us that the Old Testament scriptures (“whatsoever things were written before”) were written for our learning; for that reason we will look at these Psalms and glean the “learning” the Holy Spirit has for us.

Before looking at several of these warring psalms, we need to understand a word that is frequently used at the beginning of many of these imperative decrees. That word is “let.”

## **Usage of Commands Involving “Let”**

When it comes to commands and the orders of obedience they declare, verbs in the imperative mood are the acceptable grammatical construction. Many English readers are unaware of how these function. Not only are most of us unfamiliar with their usage in the English language, but we are even less knowledgeable of their use or structure in the Hebrew or Greek languages, from which the Scriptures have been translated.

Commands can be issued in either the second or third person. Most English speakers or readers are familiar with the second-person construction, such as: “Run.” “Run” expresses the command, and the subject, “you,” is understood. This is a direct command.

When a command is indirect or in the third person, such as: “Let the angel of the Lord pursue His enemies,” “pursue” is the main verb and “let” expresses the imperative mood of that verb with “angel” as the subject. “Let,” in Hebrew or Greek, doesn’t actually exist as an independent word; it is usually a prefix or suffix (or in some cases, a jot or tittle) that signifies the mood of that verb to which it is attached. (It is an integral part of the verb.)

An example of this occurs in the New Testament in 1 Corinthians 16:22.

*If anyone does not love the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be accursed. ~1 Corinthians 16:22*

“Let him be accursed” is a third-person singular command. Paul is speaking as the first person; to you, his audience, as the second person; but he is referring to yet another, who is the third person. “Be” is the essential command, and since it refers to a third party, the word “let” is required to communicate grammatically. We wouldn’t say, “Him be accursed!” Therefore, we interject the word “let” to render a more smooth translation from the Greek.

In modern English, we think of “let” as a term of permission, whereas in biblical usage, it is often an imperative term, involved in a command.

Many examples of this “let” construction are contained in the warring psalms. These are commands to engage the enemy—both to us and also to angels. This is documentation for the presence of both men and angels within the army of the Lord. Angels and men are both under orders from our Commander-in-Chief.<sup>1</sup>

### Some Examples of Warring Psalms

Many of the Psalms are “warring” psalms, but for brevity’s sake, we will look at a select few. The excerpts we have chosen for this study are taken from Psalms 35, 69, 83, 109, and 149.

*Plead my cause, O LORD, with those who strive with me; Fight against those who fight against me. Take hold of shield and buckler, And stand up for my help. Also draw out the spear, And stop those who pursue me. Say to my soul, “I am your salvation.” ~Psalm 35:1–3*

These first three verses of Psalm 35 are direct commands in the second person. The next several verses, especially those using the word “let” are indirect commands in the third person.

*Let those be put to shame and brought to dishonor who seek after my life; Let those be turned back and brought to confusion who plot my hurt. Let them be like chaff before the wind, and let the angel of the LORD chase them. Let their way be dark and slippery, and let the angel of the LORD pursue them. For without cause they have hidden their net for me in a pit, which they have dug without cause for my life. Let destruction come upon him unexpectedly, and let his net that he has hidden catch himself; into that very destruction let him fall. And my soul shall be joyful in the LORD; it shall rejoice in His salvation. ~Psalm 35:4–9*

*Vindicate me, O LORD my God, according to Your righteousness; And let them not rejoice over me. ~Psalm 35:24*

This is another direct command voiced in the second person, followed by five indirect commands in the third person (including the one above).

*Let them not say in their hearts, “Ah, so we would have it!” Let them not say, “We have swallowed him up.” Let them be ashamed and brought to mutual confusion who rejoice at my hurt; Let them be clothed with shame and dishonor Who magnify themselves against me. ~Psalm 35:25–26*

David, the apple of God's eye, was His anointed and appointed ruler of the kingdom of Israel. David loved the Lord enough to defend His good Name by slaying a blasphemous enemy, the giant, Goliath (1 Samuel 17:23–51). He was not afraid to speak out and denounce God's enemies.

As the legitimate ruling authority of Israel, David issued forth commands into the spiritual realm, which were inspired by the Holy Spirit (2 Peter 1:21) for strategic spiritual warfare against those opposing God's purposes on earth. Some of these directives have been recorded in his psalms for our example and education.

*Let their table become a snare before them, and their well-being a trap. Let their eyes be darkened, so that they do not see; and make their loins shake continually. Pour out Your indignation upon them, and let Your wrathful anger take hold of them. Let their habitation be desolate; Let no one dwell in their tents. For they persecute him whom You have struck, And talk of the grief of those You have wounded. Add iniquity to their iniquity, and let them not come into Your righteousness. Let them be blotted out of the book of the living, and not be written with the righteous. But I am poor and sorrowful; Let Your salvation, O God, set me up on high. I will praise the name of God with a song, and will magnify Him with thanksgiving. ~Psalm 69:22–30*

*Make their nobles like Oreb and like Zeeb, Yes, all their princes like Zebah and Zalmunna, Who said, "Let us take for ourselves the pastures of God for a possession." O my God, make them like the whirling dust, Like the chaff before the wind! As the fire burns the woods, And as the flame sets the mountains on fire, So pursue them with Your tempest, And frighten them with Your storm. Fill their faces with shame, That they may seek Your name, O LORD. Let them be confounded and dismayed forever; Yes, let them be put to shame and perish, That men may know that You, whose name alone is the LORD, Are the Most High over all the earth. ~Psalm 83:11–18*

As we issue forth the command to deploy the angels into the spiritual battle in the heavens (Psalm 103:20), the spiritual enemies of righteousness are removed out of the way and we begin to see the evangelistic fruit of people beginning to seek the Lord and then eventually coming to know Him (2 Corinthians 4:4 says "the god of this world has blinded the minds of those that believe not").

*Set a wicked man over him, And let an accuser stand at his right hand. When he is judged, let him be found guilty, And let his prayer become sin. Let his days be few, And let another take his office. Let his children be fatherless, And his wife a widow. Let his children continually be vagabonds, and beg; Let them seek their bread also from their desolate places. Let the creditor seize all that he has, And let strangers plunder his labor. Let there be none to extend mercy to him, Nor let there be any to favor his fatherless children. Let his posterity be cut off, And in the generation following let their name be blotted out. Let the iniquity of his fathers be remembered before the LORD, And let not the sin of his mother be blotted out. Let them be continually before the LORD, That He may cut off the memory of them from the earth; Because he did not remember to show mercy, But persecuted the poor and needy man, That he might even slay the broken in heart. As he*

*loved cursing, so let it come to him; As he did not delight in blessing, so let it be far from him. As he clothed himself with cursing as with his garment, So let it enter his body like water, And like oil into his bones. Let it be to him like the garment which covers him, And for a belt with which he girds himself continually. Let this be the Lord's reward to my accusers, And to those who speak evil against my person. But You, O God the Lord, Deal with me for Your name's sake; Because Your mercy is good, deliver me. ~Psalm 109:6–21*

Some may consider the preceding commands as harsh, but when we remember that our battle is not against flesh and blood, but against spiritual wickedness, we recognize that we are enabling the angels to bring down forces of darkness who oppose and obstruct God's purposes. We will see from the final warring psalm below that it is an honor for God's children (His saints) to carry out His judgments on the earth.

*Let the saints be joyful in glory; Let them sing aloud on their beds. Let the high praises of God be in their mouth, And a two-edged sword in their hand, To execute vengeance on the nations, And punishments on the peoples; To bind their kings with chains, And their nobles with fetters of iron; To execute on them the written judgment. This honor have all His saints. Praise the LORD! ~Psalm 149:5–9*

When our Lord returns, may you be found faithful and clothed in honor!

For further study . . .

Out of 166 verses containing the word "let" in the book of Psalms, at least 104 usages are indirect third-person commands. The verses containing these usages are listed below for your reference.

---

*Destroy thou them, O God; let them fall by their own counsels; cast them out in the multitude of their transgressions; for they have rebelled against thee. ~Psalm 5:10*

*Let all mine enemies be ashamed and sore vexed: let them return and be ashamed suddenly. ~Psalm 6:10*

*Let the enemy persecute my soul, and take it; yea, let him tread down my life upon the earth, and lay mine honour in the dust. Selah. ~Psalm 7:5*

*Arise, O LORD; let not man prevail: let the heathen be judged in thy sight. ~Psalm 9:19*

*The wicked in his pride doth persecute the poor: let them be taken in the devices that they have imagined. ~Psalm 10:2*

*O my God, I trust in thee: let me not be ashamed, let not mine enemies triumph over me. ~Psalm 25:2*

*Yea, let none that wait on thee be ashamed: let them be ashamed which transgress without cause. ~Psalm 25:3*

*Let me not be ashamed, O LORD; for I have called upon thee: let the wicked be ashamed, and let them be silent in the grave. ~Psalm 31:17*

*Let the lying lips be put to silence; which speak grievous things proudly and contemptuously against the righteous. ~Psalm 31:18*

*Let them be confounded and put to shame that seek after my soul: let them be turned back and brought to confusion that devise my hurt. ~Psalm 35:4*

*Let them be as chaff before the wind: and let the angel of the LORD chase them. ~Psalm 35:5*

*Let their way be dark and slippery: and let the angel of the LORD persecute them. ~Psalm 35:6*

*Let destruction come upon him at unawares; and let his net that he hath hid catch himself: into that very destruction let him fall. ~Psalm 35:8*

*Let not them that are mine enemies wrongfully rejoice over me: neither let them wink with the eye that hate me without a cause. ~Psalm 35:19*

*Judge me, O LORD my God, according to thy righteousness; and let them not rejoice over me. ~Psalm 35:24*

*Let them not say in their hearts, Ah, so would we have it: let them not say, We have swallowed him up. ~Psalm 35:25*

*Let them be ashamed and brought to confusion together that rejoice at mine hurt: let them be clothed with shame and dishonour that magnify themselves against me. ~Psalm 35:26*

*Let not the foot of pride come against me, and let not the hand of the wicked remove me. ~Psalm 36:11*

*Let them be ashamed and confounded together that seek after my soul to destroy it; let them be driven backward and put to shame that wish me evil. ~Psalm 40:14*

*Let them be desolate for a reward of their shame that say unto me, Aha, aha. ~Psalm 40:15*

*Let death seize upon them, and let them go down quick into hell: for wickedness is in their dwellings, and among them. ~Psalm 55:15*

*Let them melt away as waters which run continually: when he bendeth his bow to shoot his arrows, let them be as cut in pieces. ~Psalm 58:7*

*As a snail which melteth, let every one of them pass away: like the untimely birth of a woman, that they may not see the sun. ~Psalm 58:8*

*And at evening let them return; and let them make a noise like a dog, and go round about the city. ~Psalm 59:14*

*Let them wander up and down for meat, and grudge if they be not satisfied. ~Psalm 59:15*

*He ruleth by his power for ever; his eyes behold the nations: let not the rebellious exalt themselves. Selah. ~Psalm 66:7*

*Let God arise, let his enemies be scattered: let them also that hate him flee before him. Psalm 68:1*

*As smoke is driven away, so drive them away: as wax melteth before the fire, so let the wicked perish at the presence of God. ~Psalm 68:2*

*Let their table become a snare before them: and that which should have been for their welfare, let it become a trap. ~Psalm 69:22*

*Let their eyes be darkened, that they see not; and make their loins continually to shake. ~Psalm 69:23*

*Pour out thine indignation upon them, and let thy wrathful anger take hold of them. ~Psalm 69:24*

*Let their habitation be desolate; and let none dwell in their tents. ~Psalm 69:25*

*Add iniquity unto their iniquity: and let them not come into thy righteousness. ~Psalm 69:27*

*Let them be blotted out of the book of the living, and not be written with the righteous. ~Psalm 69:28*

*Let them be ashamed and confounded that seek after my soul: let them be turned backward, and put to confusion, that desire my hurt. ~Psalm 70:2*

*Let them be turned back for a reward of their shame that say, Aha, aha. ~Psalm 70:3*

*Let them be confounded and consumed that are adversaries to my soul; let them be covered with reproach and dishonour that seek my hurt. ~Psalm 71:13*

*Wherefore should the heathen say, Where is their God? Let him be known among the heathen in our sight by the revenging of the blood of thy servants which is shed. ~Psalm 79:10*

*Let them be confounded and troubled for ever; yea, let them be put to shame, and perish. ~Psalm 83:17*

*The LORD reigneth; let the people tremble: he sitteth between the cherubims; let the earth be moved. ~Psalm 99:1*

*Let the sinners be consumed out of the earth, and let the wicked be no more. Bless thou the LORD, O my soul. Praise ye the LORD. ~Psalm 104:35*

*Let the redeemed of the LORD say so, whom he hath redeemed from the hand of the enemy. ~Psalm 107:2*

*And let them sacrifice the sacrifices of thanksgiving, and declare his works with rejoicing. ~Psalm 107:22*

*Let them exalt him also in the congregation of the people, and praise him in the assembly of the elders. ~Psalm 107:32*

*When he shall be judged, let him be condemned: and let his prayer become sin. ~Psalm 109:7*

*Let his days be few; and let another take his office. ~Psalm 109:8*

*Let his children be fatherless, and his wife a widow. ~Psalm 109:9*

*Let his children be continually vagabonds, and beg: let them seek their bread also out of their desolate places. ~Psalm 109:10*

*Let the extortioner catch all that he hath; and let the strangers spoil his labour. ~Psalm 109:11*

*Let there be none to extend mercy unto him: neither let there be any to favour his fatherless children. ~Psalm 109:12*

*Let his posterity be cut off; and in the generation following let their name be blotted out. ~Psalm 109:13*

*Let the iniquity of his fathers be remembered with the LORD; and let not the sin of his mother be blotted out. ~Psalm 109:14*

*Let them be before the LORD continually, that he may cut off the memory of them from the earth. ~Psalm 109:15*

*As he loved cursing, so let it come unto him: as he delighted not in blessing, so let it be far from him. ~Psalm 109:17*

*As he clothed himself with cursing like as with his garment, so let it come into his bowels like water, and like oil into his bones. ~Psalm 109:18*

*Let it be unto him as the garment which covereth him, and for a girdle wherewith he is girded continually. ~Psalm 109:19*

*Let this be the reward of mine adversaries from the LORD, and of them that speak evil against my soul. ~Psalm 109:20*



*Let them curse, but bless thou: when they arise, let them be ashamed; but let thy servant rejoice. ~Psalm 109:28*

*Let mine adversaries be clothed with shame, and let them cover themselves with their own confusion, as with a mantle. ~Psalm 109:29*

*Let Israel now say, that his mercy endureth for ever. ~Psalm 118:2*

*Let the proud be ashamed; for they dealt perversely with me without a cause: but I will meditate in thy precepts. ~Psalm 119:78*

*Let them all be confounded and turned back that hate Zion. ~Psalm 129:5*

*Let them be as the grass upon the housetops, which withereth afore it groweth up. ~Psalm 129:6*

*If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning. ~Psalm 137:5*

*If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth; if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy. ~Psalm 137:6*

*As for the head of those that compass me about, let the mischief of their own lips cover them. ~Psalm 140:9*

*Let burning coals fall upon them: let them be cast into the fire; into deep pits, that they rise not up again. ~Psalm 140:10*

*Let not an evil speaker be established in the earth: evil shall hunt the violent man to overthrow him. ~Psalm 140:11*

*Let the wicked fall into their own nets, whilst that I withal escape. ~Psalm 141:10*

*Let the high praises of God be in their mouth, and a two-edged sword in their hand. ~Psalm 149:6*

## **Notes**

1. Dale M. Sides, *Angels in the Army* (Bedford, VA: Liberating Publications, Inc., 2004) 21–25.