

## **Dr. Tremper Longman, God is a Warrior, Session 5, Synthesis on God as Warrior Resources from NotebookLM**

1) Abstract, 2) Audio podcast, 3) Study Guide, 4) Briefing Document, and 5) FAQs

### **1. Abstract of Longman, God is a Warrior, Session 5, Synthesis on God as Warrior, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL**

**Dr. Tremper Longman's lecture** discusses the biblical portrayal of God as a warrior, arguing for the **coherence of this image** throughout the Old and New Testaments. He refutes interpretations that attempt to separate the Old Testament's depiction of God's violent acts from the New Testament, emphasizing the **continuity of God's judgment** on sin. Longman acknowledges the **ethical complexities** of this image, particularly concerning Old Testament violence, but stresses the importance of understanding the **spiritual warfare** described in scripture as relevant to contemporary Christians. Finally, he connects the Old Testament's portrayal of divine judgment with the **concept of final judgment**, viewing it as a preview of God's ultimate justice.

**2. 15 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of  
Dr. Longman, God is a Warrior, Session 5 – Double click icon to  
play in Windows media player or go to the  
Biblicalelearning.org [BeL] Site and click the audio podcast link  
there (Theology → God is a Warrior).**



**Longman\_Warrior\_  
Session05.mp3**

### 3. Briefing Document

Okay, here is a detailed briefing document summarizing the key themes and ideas from the provided excerpts of Dr. Tremper Longman's lecture on "God is a Warrior":

#### **Briefing Document: Dr. Tremper Longman on "God is a Warrior" - Session 5: Synthesis**

##### **Introduction:**

This document summarizes Dr. Tremper Longman's fifth session on "God is a Warrior," focusing on synthesizing the concept across the Old and New Testaments. Longman argues for the coherence of the divine warrior theme throughout scripture, while also acknowledging development in its manifestation, particularly the shift from physical to spiritual warfare. He addresses challenges to this view, particularly from those who prioritize the "Jesus on the cross" image, and provides alternative interpretations of difficult Old Testament passages.

##### **Key Themes and Ideas:**

##### **1. Coherence of the Biblical Picture:**

- Longman emphasizes the consistency of God's role as a warrior throughout the Bible, despite a transition from physical to spiritual warfare. He argues against the idea that the Old Testament picture of a violent God is fundamentally incompatible with the New Testament.
- Quote: "So, it's not as if there's this transition from the Old Testament to the New Testament that loses sight of God's judgment on us as sinners unless we repent and turn to him."

##### **1. Critique of Approaches that Divorce Old and New Testaments:**

- Longman critiques scholars like Greg Boyd, Peter Enns, and Eric Siebert, who attempt to resolve the perceived violence of the Old Testament by prioritizing a "Jesus on the cross" model. He argues that these scholars treat the Bible as a problem to be solved rather than a text to be explained.
- These scholars tend to see Old Testament portrayals of God as either cultural accommodations or products of the human author's depraved mind.

- Quote: "[Boyd] says, the most perfect representation of who God is, is Jesus on the cross... any picture of God in the Bible, which doesn't live up to that standard of Jesus on the cross, is either a result of cultural accommodation... or it's the product of the human author's depraved mind."
- Longman believes these approaches ultimately diminish the Old Testament's witness.

#### 1. **Development of the Divine Warrior Theme:**

- While affirming coherence, Longman acknowledges a *development* from physical warfare in the Old Testament to *spiritual warfare* in the New Testament.
- He stresses that the current era (phase four) is characterized by spiritual warfare, meaning Christians should not use physical violence to advance the gospel.
- Quote: "And it's really, really important that we understand ourselves to be living in phase four, a time of spiritual warfare, not physical warfare, which means that we should never use violence to promote the gospel, the church, or Jesus."

#### 1. **Spiritual Warfare in the Old Testament:**

- Longman demonstrates that spiritual warfare is *not exclusive to the New Testament*, citing examples from the Old Testament.
- **Plagues on Egypt:** The plagues are presented as attacks on the spiritual powers (the "gods of Egypt") behind the human conflict.
- Quote: "on this day, I will have victory over the gods of Egypt."
- **Daniel 10:** The angelic battle in Daniel illustrates spiritual forces behind political conflicts. The angel's delayed arrival is due to spiritual resistance from the "prince of the Persian kingdom."
- Quote: "But the prince of the Persian kingdom resisted me for twenty-one days."
- These passages illustrate the pre-existence of spiritual warfare underlying physical conflict.

#### 1. **Nature of Current Spiritual Warfare:**

- Longman outlines that spiritual warfare today takes various forms:
- Fighting against injustices
- Evangelism (carefully understood, not as coercion)

- Internal struggle against sin (illustrated by Romans 7)
- Quote: "I see another law at work in me, waging war against the law of my mind, and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within me."

#### 1. **Ethics of Old Testament Violence and Herem:**

- Longman acknowledges the difficulty of interpreting the violence in the Old Testament, particularly the concept of *herem* (total destruction).
- He emphasizes that the incomplete adherence to *herem* led to the Israelites' corruption by Canaanite culture.
- He contextualizes the violence as God's *just punishment* for sin.
- Quote: "But I do want to say that in a day like our day, where we're very concerned about justice, seeing people get the punishment that they deserve for their crimes, that really what we're talking about here is a matter of God justly punishing people for their sins."

#### 1. **Wrath of God and Miroslav Volf:**

- He presents a quote from Miroslav Volf, who argues that God's wrath is *essential* to God's love.
- Quote: "God isn't wrathful in spite of being love. God is wrathful because God is love."
- Volf's personal experience of violence in the former Yugoslavia helped him to understand the necessity of divine wrath in response to profound evil.

#### 1. **Old Testament Warfare as a Preview of Final Judgment:**

- Longman argues that instances of divine judgment in the Old Testament, such as the conquest of Canaan, serve as a *preview of the Final Judgment*.
- These moments are presented as "intrusions of end-time ethics" into a period of "common grace," where God's judgment is not fully enacted.
- Quote: "a teacher of mine in the past, Meredith Klein, described what I'm about to talk about as an intrusion of end-time ethics into the period of common grace."

#### 1. **The Importance of Multiple Metaphors:**

- Longman concludes by reiterating that the divine warrior is *one metaphor* among many used to describe God.

- Understanding this theme is important for understanding God, as it runs from Genesis to Revelation.
- Quote: "We started this session by talking about the multiple metaphors that are used to describe God to us. And no one of them captures anything close to the whole picture. But it is an important part of that picture..."

**Conclusion:**

Dr. Longman's lecture argues that God as a warrior is a consistent and important theme throughout the Bible, one that evolves from physical to spiritual warfare. While acknowledging difficult passages and ethical questions, he urges a holistic reading of the scripture, resisting the urge to solve perceived problems through selective interpretation. He offers a framework for understanding the Old Testament depictions of warfare as a preview of the final judgment and emphasizes the importance of the metaphor of the divine warrior in understanding God's character and activity in the world.

## 4. God is a Warrior, Session 5, Synthesis on God as Warrior

### God as a Warrior: A Study Guide

#### Quiz

**Instructions:** Answer each question in 2-3 sentences.

1. How does Dr. Longman describe the coherence of the divine warrior theme throughout the Bible?
2. What event significantly shifted the perception of the divine warrior theme among Christians?
3. What is Greg Boyd's main argument about interpreting Old Testament portrayals of God as a warrior?
4. According to Longman, what is the significance of the transition from physical to spiritual warfare in the New Testament?
5. What does Ephesians 6:10-18 describe and how does it relate to the concept of spiritual warfare?
6. According to Dr. Longman, how do the plagues against Egypt demonstrate a spiritual battle in the Old Testament?
7. How does the story of Daniel 10 illustrate spiritual warfare?
8. What are three examples of how the spiritual battle can manifest in our lives today, according to the source?
9. What issue is raised regarding the Old Testament concept of *herem*?
10. How does Miroslav Volf's experience in Yugoslavia contribute to understanding the idea of God's wrath?

#### Quiz - Answer Key

1. Dr. Longman emphasizes that the divine warrior theme is coherent, with a consistent picture of God's judgment on sin, even with a transition from physical to spiritual warfare. He argues that the New Testament does not negate the Old Testament's depiction of God's judgment but rather culminates in it.
2. The events of 9/11 significantly shifted the perception of the divine warrior theme. This led people to connect the idea of divine violence with fundamentalist Islamic perspectives, raising discomfort and concern for some Christians.

3. Greg Boyd argues that the most perfect representation of God is Jesus on the cross. He claims that any depiction of God in the Bible that does not meet that standard, specifically violence, is either a result of cultural accommodation or the product of a human author's depraved mind.
4. Longman highlights the shift from physical warfare in the Old Testament to spiritual warfare in the New Testament, noting that Christians today are engaged in the latter. This means believers should not use violence to promote their faith but should focus on spiritual weapons and transformation.
5. Ephesians 6:10-18 describes the armor of God that believers should wear to engage in spiritual warfare against evil forces. It highlights that the Christian struggle is not against human beings but against spiritual powers, which should be fought with spiritual weapons like prayer, truth, faith, and the Word of God.
6. The plagues against Egypt demonstrate a spiritual battle by showing God's victory over the gods of Egypt, which Longman argues are evil demonic spiritual powers. Each plague is suggested to be tailored against a specific Egyptian deity, showcasing God's supremacy over them.
7. Daniel 10 illustrates spiritual warfare by depicting an angelic messenger encountering resistance from the "prince of the Persian kingdom," requiring the help of the archangel Michael. This underscores a hidden spiritual conflict behind human events.
8. According to the source, three examples of the manifestation of spiritual battle in our lives include fighting against injustices in the world, evangelism, and the internal battle against sin described by Paul in Romans 7.
9. The concept of *herem* raises a difficult issue regarding the ethics of God ordering the complete destruction of cities, including all inhabitants, in the Old Testament. This has prompted questions about the morality of such commands, especially regarding the killing of women and children.
10. Miroslav Volf's experience in the war-torn former Yugoslavia helped him understand God's wrath as a necessary aspect of divine love. Seeing the horrific violence committed against his people made him realize he would have to rebel against a God who *wasn't* wrathful at such extreme evil.

## Essay Questions

**Instructions:** Answer these questions with a well-organized essay that demonstrates understanding of the source material.

1. Analyze the different phases of God's warfare against evil as presented by Dr. Longman. How does the concept of spiritual warfare in the New Testament relate to and differ from the Old Testament depictions of God as a warrior?
2. Evaluate Greg Boyd's critique of the divine warrior concept. What are Longman's arguments against Boyd's perspective, and why does he argue for the coherence of the biblical picture of God as a warrior?
3. Discuss the significance of the shift from physical to spiritual warfare in the New Testament, according to the source material. How should Christians understand their role in spiritual battle today, and what are the implications for the use of violence in the name of faith?
4. Explore the idea of spiritual warfare present in both the Old and New Testaments. Drawing from specific examples, describe how spiritual forces operate in the biblical narrative and how they are relevant to the life of believers today.
5. Examine the ethical challenges posed by Old Testament depictions of divine violence, particularly the concept of *herem*. How does the source address these issues, and what does it suggest about the relationship between God's justice and love?



## Glossary

**Cultural Accommodation:** The idea that some biblical depictions of God may be influenced by the culture and perspective of the time in which they were written, rather than being a perfect representation of God's true nature.

**Divine Warrior:** A biblical metaphor that depicts God as a fighter who battles against evil and injustice, often in the form of physical warfare in the Old Testament and spiritual warfare in the New Testament.

**End-Time Ethics:** The concept that God's ultimate judgment and justice will be fully realized at the end of time, with consequences for both the righteous and unrighteous; this is in contrast to the "common grace" of the present age.

**Herem:** A Hebrew term used in the Old Testament which refers to the complete destruction of a city and its inhabitants, often as a divine command.

**Inerrancy:** The belief that the Bible is without error in its original manuscripts and is therefore completely trustworthy in all that it asserts.

**Pacifism:** The belief that violence and war are unjustifiable and that conflicts should be resolved through peaceful means.

**Spiritual Warfare:** The battle that believers engage in against spiritual forces of evil, rather than physical conflict. This often involves prayer, faith, resisting temptation, and the use of spiritual weapons as described in Ephesians 6.

## 5. FAQs on Longman, God is a Warrior, Session 5, Synthesis on God as Warrior, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

### Frequently Asked Questions About the Biblical Concept of God as a Warrior

1. **How does the concept of God as a warrior evolve from the Old Testament to the New Testament?** While the Bible consistently portrays God as a warrior, there is a significant shift in the *type* of warfare. In the Old Testament, the emphasis is often on physical battles against Israel's enemies, whereas in the New Testament, the focus transitions to spiritual warfare against evil powers. However, this does not imply a change in God's character or justice; rather, it is a development in the way God's redemptive plan unfolds. Both testaments depict God as loving, just, and ultimately a judge. The culmination of God as warrior is found in Revelation, where the final judgment is enacted against all evil, both human and spiritual.
2. **Why is the idea of God as a warrior considered controversial, and what arguments are used to downplay this imagery?** The idea of a violent God clashes with modern sensibilities and concepts of peace, often leading to attempts to minimize or re-interpret biblical passages that depict God as a warrior. Some argue that the Old Testament's portrayal of God's violence is a product of cultural accommodation or even the result of the human authors' flawed understanding. They often elevate the image of Jesus on the cross as the ultimate and perfect representation of God, suggesting that any depiction that doesn't align with this is not representative of God's true nature. For some, this leads to the marginalization of Old Testament accounts as inaccurate or culturally limited.
3. **How should Christians understand and reconcile the Old Testament accounts of God's violence with the teachings of Jesus?** Christians should understand that while there is a transition from physical to spiritual warfare, there is a consistency in God's character and justice. The Old Testament acts of divine judgment should be understood in the context of God's justice and holiness against sin, not as random acts of violence. The Old Testament battles can be seen as a preview or anticipation of the final judgment, a warning against persistent rejection of God. Ultimately, God's love and justice are consistent throughout the Bible, even when the *mode* of His actions appear different between the Old and New Testaments.

4. **What is the meaning of "spiritual warfare" for Christians today?** Spiritual warfare, as described in the New Testament, particularly in Ephesians 6, is not about physical battles but about resisting the influence of evil spiritual forces. It is a struggle against "rulers, authorities, and powers of this dark world" and against sin in our own hearts. This warfare is fought with spiritual weapons, such as faith, truth, righteousness, prayer, and the Word of God, not physical weapons. This means Christians are called to a life of engaging the powers of darkness through practices like prayer and evangelism and resisting personal sin. The battle is not against people, but against spiritual powers and systems of darkness.
5. **How does the concept of "herem" (complete destruction) in the Old Testament relate to God's justice?** The "herem" practices in the Old Testament, where cities were completely destroyed, are among the most difficult ethical questions to grapple with. These acts of destruction are, according to the biblical text, an execution of God's judgment on the profound sin and corruption of these peoples. While these are difficult and unsettling, they must be viewed as an example of God's just punishment of sin, and as a preview of the final judgment. It is not God acting randomly but responding to human sin. This does not mean these acts are not difficult for modern readers, but helps understand the weight of the sins at hand.
6. **How does the concept of God's wrath fit into the understanding of God's love?** God's wrath is not a contradiction to His love but is actually an expression of it. God's love for the world compels Him to be opposed to evil and injustice. Wrath is a righteous response to sin and the suffering it causes. It's not about God being angry in the way humans are, but rather a deep aversion to evil. This connection was clarified to some by reflecting on human suffering caused by injustice and seeing God's wrath as a necessity, because a God of love must hate evil and must want justice.
7. **How can Christians engage in spiritual warfare today in practical terms?** Christians can engage in spiritual warfare in a variety of ways. One is through personal struggles against their own sins, using the resources of grace and the power of the Holy Spirit. They also engage by actively working against injustices in the world, resisting systems of evil, and practicing evangelism. Evangelism is understood as doing damage to the evil powers by bringing people into the Kingdom of God. The core of this battle is not coercive or violent, but rooted in faith, prayer, and the transformation of hearts. This is all undertaken while being careful to avoid violence in all situations.

8. **Is there a danger in applying Old Testament passages about physical warfare to contemporary issues?** Yes, absolutely. One of the core takeaways from the sources is that it's crucial to understand the transition to spiritual warfare. Applying Old Testament passages about physical warfare to justify violence, such as using violence to promote the gospel or persecute those of other religions or beliefs, is a gross misunderstanding of biblical teaching. The New Testament calls for spiritual weapons, not physical ones. Misinterpreting these Old Testament passages has been behind some of the worst acts of violence in the name of Christianity, from the Crusades to other historical periods of violence against outsiders.