

Sunday March 5th, 2006

Spiritual Warfare Series part 4

Finally

1). The verse that begins the section in Ephesians 6 on the Spiritual Warfare is as follows - Eph 6:10 ¶ *Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might.*

a). And we will note that the verse begins with the word ‘finally’.

b). This is the Greek word ‘loipon’ which we would understand to mean something yet remaining to be done.

c). This then is not a word that means this is the last thing Paul is going to write, but that there is still something remaining for the Ephesians to do, in addition to all that Paul has previously said.

d). And so in order to understand our Spiritual Warfare section we must see it within the context of Paul’s message to the church at Ephesus.

e). And we realize of course that this is God’s message to the church at large.

2). Paul wrote this letter while he was imprisoned in Rome and in it he references that which he had previously taught them during the time that he spent there.

a). Somewhere between two and three years, beginning around the winter of A.D. 55.

3). To understand the scope of what he taught them we need only go to Acts chapter 20, to the words he speaks to the elders of the church in Ephesus - Ac 20:17 ¶ *From Miletus he sent to Ephesus and called for the elders of the church. 18 And when they had come to him, he said to them: "You know, from the first day that I came to Asia, in what manner I always lived among you, 19 "serving the Lord with all humility, with many tears and trials which happened to me by the plotting of the Jews; 20 "how I kept back nothing that was helpful, but proclaimed it to you, and taught you publicly and from house to house, 21 "testifying to Jews, and also to Greeks, repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.....25 "And indeed, now I know that you all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, will see my face no more. 26 "Therefore I testify to you this day that I*

am innocent of the blood of all men. 27 "For I have not shunned to declare to you the whole counsel of God.

a). It is abundantly clear

i/ I kept nothing back that was helpful

ii/ repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus

Christ

iii/ the Kingdom of God

iv/ the whole counsel of God.

b). In other words he began by declaring the gospel of the grace of God, and then to those who were saved through this gospel he declared the purpose of their salvation – the gospel of the glory of Christ and that which is necessary to participate in that glory - Ro 8:17 ¶ *and if children, then heirs--heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together.*

4). And we will remember that this is not a message he received through the teaching of men, but directly from the Lord Himself.

a). Ga 1:11 *But I make known to you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man. 12 For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came through the revelation of Jesus Christ.*

5). God had already said, - Ps 25:14 *The secret of the LORD is with those who fear Him, And He will show them His covenant.*

a). Jer 33:3 *'Call to Me, and I will answer you, and show you great and mighty things, which you do not know.'*

6). It is a fulfillment of these scriptures that we find in Paul's message throughout the N/T epistles.

a). A message he was specifically ordained to give to a church that would be predominantly made up of Gentiles – a message that had been hidden through the ages awaiting the appointed time for its revelation – Eph 3:2 *if indeed you have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which was given to me for you, 3 how that by revelation He made known to me the mystery (as I have briefly written already, 4 by which, when you read, you may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ), 5 which in other ages was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to His holy apostles and prophets: 6 that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ through the gospel, 7 of which I became a minister according to the*

gift of the grace of God given to me by the effective working of His power. 8 To me, who am less than the least of all the saints, this grace was given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, 9 and to make all see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the ages has been hidden in God who created all things through Jesus Christ; 10 to the intent that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places, 11 according to the eternal purpose which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord, 12 in whom we have boldness and access with confidence through faith in Him.

7). The reason for this revelation Paul gives at the beginning of his letter

a). Eph 1:1 ¶ *Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, To the saints who are in Ephesus, and faithful in Christ Jesus: 2 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. 3 ¶ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, 4 just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, 5 having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, 6 to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He has made us accepted in the Beloved. 7 In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace 8 which He made to abound toward us in all wisdom and prudence, 9 having made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself, 10 that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth--in Him.*

b). Please note that Paul does not lay foundation in this letter, but goes straight to the heart of the matter. He is writing to people who understood what he was saying.

c). Spiritual blessings in the heavenly places in Christ – clearly not now

d). Chose us in Him before the foundation of the world – just as the Woman was in Adam.

e). Having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself – sonship always implies rulership. And here we find Gentile believers who through their faithfulness will be adopted as a first born son of God, according to the good pleasure of His will. And this is the essence of

the mystery as we saw it in Ephesians 3. That those who are Gentiles would make up God's third first born son.

f). There have to be three as this is God's number of divine perfection.

g). If sons are the perfect means of rulership then there must be three.

h). There is the only begotten Son - Col 2:9 *For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily;*

i). The fullness of the Godhead – Father, Son and Holy Spirit – three parts

j). There is Israel - Ex 4:22 *"Then you shall say to Pharaoh, 'Thus says the LORD: "Israel is My son, My firstborn."*

k). And now according to our scripture – faithful believers from the Gentiles, within the body of Christ.

l). And interestingly both Jews and Gentiles who will rule with Christ are also tripartite beings – Spirit, soul and body.

m). *10 that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth--in Him.*

And we are dealing with a timeframe that looks to the seventh day, the Rest of God, the Millennial Kingdom and the change of rulership that will take place at that time.

Col 1:16 For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him.

8). Those to whom the letter is written would understand these things.

a). Don't forget Acts 20: 27 *"For I have not shunned to declare to you the whole counsel of God.*

b). And this is significant for us to know with regards to the spiritual warfare because of the word 'finally' – putting on the whole armor of God is that which remains for those who understand sonship, adoption and the coming kingdom.

9). In Ephesians Chapter 2 Paul reminds them of the means of their eternal salvation, and also reminds them of the purpose for that salvation

a). Eph 2:1 ¶ *And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins, 2 in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, 3 among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the*

mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others. 4 ¶ But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, 5 even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), 6 and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, 7 that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. 8 For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, 9 not of works, lest anyone should boast.

10 For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them. 11 ¶

Therefore remember that you, once Gentiles in the flesh--who are called Uncircumcision by what is called the Circumcision made in the flesh by hands-- 12 that at that time you were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. 13 But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

14 ¶ For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation, 15 having abolished in His flesh the enmity, that is, the law of commandments contained in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man from the two, thus making peace, 16 and that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity. 17 And He came and preached peace to you who were afar off and to those who were near. 18 For through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father. 19 Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, 20 having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone, 21 in whom the whole building, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, 22 in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.

(Teach this)

b). Again this is significant for us to know with regards to the spiritual warfare because of the word ‘finally’ – putting on the whole armor of God is that which remains for those who understand the nature and purpose of their eternal salvation – and we are hopefully beginning to realize that the armor itself is inextricably linked with the understanding of this truth.

10). Chapter 2 leads us into Chapter 3 which we have already dealt with.

11). Having spent three chapters reminding ‘the saints who are in Ephesus, and faithful in Christ Jesus’ of the enormity of what God has done for them, he urges them to walk worthy of this high calling.

a). Eph 4:1 ¶ *I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, 2 ¶ with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, 3 endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. 4 There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; 5 one Lord, one faith, one baptism;*

b). And he reminds them of the gifts that God has provided to enable them in this walk of faith - Eph 4:11 *And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, 12 for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, 13 till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; 14 that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, 15 but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head--Christ-- 16 from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.*

c). And inevitably in this we will note the process of maturity that is necessary on the part of the believer. A maturity that will result in us ‘growing up in all things into Him who is the head – Christ’ – Choosing to turn away from the things of this world and the allurements of the flesh, embracing instead the things of the Spirit. Focusing on God’s promises for the future not on the transient pleasures of sin of the moment. Dying to self, but living in the Spirit.

d). Eph 4:17 ¶ *This I say, therefore, and testify in the Lord, that you should no longer walk as the rest of the Gentiles walk, in the futility of their mind, 18 having their understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart; 19 who, being past feeling, have given themselves over to lewdness, to work all uncleanness with greediness. 20 But you have not so learned Christ, 21 if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught by Him, as the truth is in Jesus: 22 that you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, 23 and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, 24 and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and*

holiness. 25 Therefore, putting away lying, "Let each one of you speak truth with his neighbor," for we are members of one another. 26 "Be angry, and do not sin": do not let the sun go down on your wrath, 27 nor give place to the devil. 28 Let him who stole steal no longer, but rather let him labor, working with his hands what is good, that he may have something to give him who has need. 29 Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers. 30 And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. 31 Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice. 32 And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God in Christ forgave you.

e). This is not mere rhetoric, but the lifestyle of those who have understood that which Paul has written up to this point.

12). And this admonition continues in Chapter 5 - 1 ¶ *Therefore be imitators of God as dear children. 2 And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma. 3 ¶ But fornication and all uncleanness or covetousness, let it not even be named among you, as is fitting for saints; 4 neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks. 5 For this you know, that no fornicator, unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. 6 Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. 7 Therefore do not be partakers with them. 8 For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light 9 (for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth), 10 finding out what is acceptable to the Lord. 11 And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them. 12 For it is shameful even to speak of those things which are done by them in secret. 13 But all things that are exposed are made manifest by the light, for whatever makes manifest is light. 14 Therefore He says: "Awake, you who sleep, Arise from the dead, And Christ will give you light." 15 See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, 16 redeeming the time, because the days are evil. 17 Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is. 18 And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit, 19 speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord, 20 giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our*

Lord Jesus Christ, 21 ¶ submitting to one another in the fear of God. 22 Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. 23 For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body. 24 Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything. 25 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, 26 that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, 27 that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish. 28 So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself. 29 For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the church. 30 For we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones. 31 "For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh." 32 This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church. 33 Nevertheless let each one of you in particular so love his own wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband. (Teach this) – Particularly as it leads to the marriage relationship – take this back to God's purposes from the beginning.

13). And the admonition to kingdom lifestyle continues in Chapter 6

a). Eph 6:1 ¶ *Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. 2 "Honor your father and mother," which is the first commandment with promise: 3 "that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth." 4 And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord. 5 Bondservants, be obedient to those who are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in sincerity of heart, as to Christ; 6 not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but as bondservants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart, 7 with goodwill doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men, 8 knowing that whatever good anyone does, he will receive the same from the Lord, whether he is a slave or free. 9 And you, masters, do the same things to them, giving up threatening, knowing that your own Master also is in heaven, and there is no partiality with Him.*

b). Which brings us to verse 10 – ‘Finally’

c). For those who understand the reason for their calling, who have heard preached the Kingdom of God, having received the whole counsel of God there remains yet one thing to do - Eph 6:10 ¶ *Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. 11 Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. 12 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.

d). This then is an armor to protect and maintain the integrity of our faith toward the purpose for our salvation, our heavenly calling and our participation in the race, that we may be worthy of that calling. And it is necessary as the principalities and powers we wrestle against will focus their attack in both these areas. The enemy of our soul will try to tempt us away with a doctrine other than that we have witnessed in Ephesians today.

2Ti 4:3 For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers;

i/ This was true at the time of writing and even more so in the Laodecian church at the close of this dispensation. 'Has God indeed said' no longer comes just from the mouth of the serpent but also from the pulpits of those who have been entrusted with the word of truth.

14). To close let me re-emphasize just how important it is to put on the spiritual armor of God and keep it in place

a). Note Christ's words to the church at Ephesus at His Judgment seat as recorded in - Re 2:4 *"Nevertheless I have this against you, that you have left your first love. 5 "Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works,*

(Teach this).

b). The commitment in the Lord's Supper to maintain our integrity.