

Sunday March 12<sup>th</sup>, 2006

**Spiritual Warfare Series part 5**

The Belt of Truth

1). As we saw last week in our brief study of the book of Ephesians, the focus of the book is heavenly with respect to present and future time.

a). It deals with Christ and Christians in present and future time and with Satan and his angels in present and future time.

2). Eph 6:12 *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.*

a). Ephesians 6:12 makes it abundantly clear that at the present time it is Satan and his angels, the original rulers, who rule over this earth from the heavenly places in proximity to the earth.

i/ Joh 14:30 *"I will no longer talk much with you, for the ruler of this world is coming, and he has nothing in Me.*

b). And although they rule within God's universal authority, they are rebel rulers, ruling apart from God's divinely perfect plan.

3). However we know that - Heb 2:5 ¶ *For He has not put the world to come, of which we speak, in subjection to angels.*

a). The world to come or the age to come refers to that time that follows the completion of Man's Day – the six thousand years from Adam to the establishment of the Millennial Kingdom.

b). And this age which follows Man's day will not be in subjection to angels, as is the present world system. In this day there will be a new order of rulers occupying the heavenly places from which rulership over the earth emanates.

c). Eph 1:10 *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.*

4). In anticipation of this we read in Ephesians that –

Eph 1:19b... *according to the working of His mighty power 20 which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, 21 far above all principality and power*

*and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come.*

a). We see then in this scripture that Christ has been raised from the dead and seated at God's right hand, denoting power and authority, far above the principalities and powers.

b). Christ is at present with the Father in the 'farthest recesses of the north', that which Paul described as the third heaven, the place from which God's universal rule takes place.

c). And Christians are positionally seated with Christ in this same place

d). Eph 2:5 *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,*

e). At the present time this is a positional placement only not a literal one, but does of itself look to the day in time future when what is now positional will become literal.

f). Heb 2:6 *But one testified in a certain place, saying: "What is man that You are mindful of him, Or the son of man that You take care of him? 7 You have made him a little lower than the angels; You have crowned him with glory and honor, And set him over the works of Your hands. 8 You have put all things in subjection under his feet." For in that He put all in subjection under him, He left nothing that is not put under him. But now we do not yet see all things put under him. 9 But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that He, by the grace of God, might taste death for everyone. 10 ¶ For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.*

g). In the meantime we wait, maintaining our position, looking forward to the dispensation of the fullness of the times in the same way as those in David's day left their homes to go to David at the cave of Adulum, awaiting the time when David would ascend the throne in the stead of Saul.

5). And this change of rulership in the heavenly places has been God's eternal purpose from before the foundation of the world.

a). Eph 3:3 *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,*

b). 1Co 2:6 ¶ *However, we speak wisdom among those who are mature, yet not the wisdom of this age, nor of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing. 7 But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the ages for our glory,*

c). And the very existence of the Church declares both to men and angels the working out of God's eternal purposes in Christ Jesus.

d). Eph 3:10 *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,*

6). We also read - Eph 2:7 *that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.*

a). Not only will Christians sit with Christ on His throne in the New Jerusalem in the heavens with regard to the rulership of the earth, but also in the eternal ages to come they will sit with Christ on the throne of God and of the Lamb on the new earth where rulership will move out into the universe, the very area that Satan and his angels sought to move into at the beginning of their rebellion - Isa 14:13 *For you have said in your heart: 'I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will also sit on the mount of the congregation On the farthest sides of the north;*

b). Hence the intensity of the warfare that ensues as Satan seeks to counter that which God has set in place.

7). And we would do well to note that this is not an indiscriminate warfare, but a deliberate and systematic campaign designed to overthrow Christians from the goal of their calling.

8). In Chapter 4 of Ephesians we read that - Eph 4:11 *And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers,*

a). And that he has given pastor/Teachers to the church for a revealed reason

b). Eph 4:14 *That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, **whereby they lie in wait to deceive;***

c). The predatory nature of what we see here is self evident.

d). We cannot help but see then that our growth to maturity, which comes through the ministry of the word through Pastor/Teachers, is for the purpose of having victory over our enemy who lies in wait to deceive us.

e). And we cannot help but realize that our maturity is in relation to understanding God's eternal purpose as it relates to the reason for our redemption and our calling.

f). Do not be deceived spiritual maturity does not come through the length of time we have been a Christian, nor does it come through reading our Bible per se, or being able to quote scripture at length or through religious performance. No, it comes as a result of understanding what God has laid out in scripture from the beginning to the end, that which we have dealt with in numerous scriptures today already.

g). Heb 5:10 ¶ *called by God as High Priest "according to the order of Melchizedek," 11 of whom we have much to say, and hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing. 12 For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food.*  
(Teach this)

9). And in connection with that which we read in Ephesians 4 we also see this in Ephesians 6 - 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.*

a). No spiritually immature Christian can be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might, nor would they be able to put on the whole armor of God.

b). But those who are mature realize where strength and power are and realize that it is only from putting on the whole armor of God that they will be able to stand against the wiles – the deliberate and systematic plans – of the devil to bring about their downfall.

c). Can we realize that if we didn't need the whole armor of God, He wouldn't have given it to us?

d). That we need it to be able to stand against the wiles of the devil, and without it we most certainly won't.

e). Or have we already been deceived into thinking something different?

10). 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. 13 Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. 14 Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth,*

11). The first part of the armor we are to put on is the belt of truth.

a). The belt in Roman armor, which is used as a metaphor for our spiritual armor, is that part which holds everything else in place. If the soldier had not put his belt on properly he would be at risk, as the integrity of the rest of his armor would be compromised.

b). And so with us – the belt of truth must be in place first.

c). Now the truth referred to in this scripture is not a reference to receiving the word of God – as we have already noted, those who put on the armor are already in possession of the word of God to a degree that goes beyond the milk of the word to the meat and the strong meat.

i/ It is the word of God in a general sense that we find in Ephesians 6:17 in reference to the sword of the Spirit.

d). Nor is it any reference to us always telling the truth – within our context such an interpretation would be fascile in the extreme.

12). In order to understand the belt of truth correctly, let us go to the place we always need to go – the O/T types.

a). In this case the first generation of Israel coming out of Egypt.

13). We will remember that they were redeemed for a purpose – De 6:23 *'Then He brought us out from there, that He might bring us in, to give us the land of which He swore to our fathers.*

a). They were redeemed from the land of their bondage to enter the land of their calling at the head of the nations, receiving their inheritance and ruling within a theocracy with God in their midst.

b). We also have been redeemed from the land of our bondage and we have a heavenly calling and a promised inheritance within that heavenly land - Eph 1:11a *In Him also we have obtained an inheritance,*

c). The process began for Israel with a rudimentary understanding of God's provision of a substitutionary death on their behalf – the paschal lambs – just as we put faith in the death and shed blood of our substitute, the Lord Jesus Christ – the Lamb of God

d). Israel was then led, by the Spirit, on a journey which had direction and purpose with the final destination of the land and their inheritance in

view and during this journey God revealed to them all they needed to know about His plans and purposes for them in that land.

e). We too are on a journey and the Spirit of God leads in only one direction, to the land of our calling. And we also on this journey are being taught all we need to know about God's purpose for us within this land. That's what happens here every Sunday and in every Bible study.

f). Israel had been led from knowledge (gnosis) to a mature knowledge (epignosis) in relation to God's plans and purposes. And it is in this condition that they arrive at Kadesh Barnea with the land in view.

i/ It is so important for us to realize this. They were not in ignorance. They knew exactly why they had been redeemed, they knew why they were there and what God had promised them.

ii/ It is also important for us to note that the only subject of God's teaching was the theocracy within the land of promise and how this was to be attained.

iii/ It is only when they have arrived at this point that they are able to now engage the enemy in battle.

g). As Israel stood at Kadesh Barnea it remained only for them to enter the land – being strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Defeat their enemies in battle, receive their inheritance and establish the theocratic kingdom in accord with God's promises.

h). They sent spies into the land who testified of its goodness and they even tasted its fruit for themselves.

i). That their enemies were bigger, stronger and more numerous than them was of no consequence whatsoever for God had spoken. They were to view this situation from a Divine standpoint not a naturalistic one.

14). Likewise we also find ourselves at our Kadesh Barnea with the land of promise before us. There are those who have spied out the land and brought a report of it to us and we have even tasted its fruit - Heb 6:5 *and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come,*

a). The fact that our enemies are spirit beings of enormous strength and power is of no consequence for God has spoken. And we must view it from a Divine standpoint, not a naturalistic one - 2Co 5:7 *For we walk by faith, not by sight.*

15). However, Israel, as a nation was deceived – they believed something other than what God had said, and refused to enter the conflict believing that they were unable to be victorious. All that is except Joshua and Caleb.

a). Nu 13:30 *Then Caleb quieted the people before Moses, and said, "Let us go up at once and take possession, for we are well able to overcome it."*

b). And here is our belt of truth – it is an earnest, sincere and determined decision to enter the battle, knowing that it is in the Lord that we have strength and power. Believing what God has said.

c). Being absolutely determined that by following God's instructions, victory is absolutely certain.

d). It is that bold and courageous determination to do whatever it takes to see God's eternal plans and purposes fulfilled in us and through us.

i/ This is the same determination we saw in Ruth -

*Ru 1:16 But Ruth said: "Entreat me not to leave you, Or to turn back from following after you; For wherever you go, I will go; And wherever you lodge, I will lodge; Your people shall be my people, And your God, my God.*

ii/ The same that we saw in Rebekah - *Ge 24:58 Then they called Rebekah and said to her, "Will you go with this man?" And she said, "I will go."*

iii/ And in the inspired testimony of the Apostle Paul –

*Php 3:12 Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me.*

e). It is a determination that doesn't wane over time, but remains strong, steadfast and immovable. Just as Caleb's was

f). *Jos 14:10 "And now, behold, the LORD has kept me alive, as He said, these forty-five years, ever since the LORD spoke this word to Moses while Israel wandered in the wilderness; and now, here I am this day, eighty-five years old. 11 "As yet I am as strong this day as on the day that Moses sent me; just as my strength was then, so now is my strength for war, both for going out and for coming in. 12 "Now therefore, give me this mountain....."*

16). You see, without the determination to enter this conflict after the right fashion and without the determination to see victory, without the absolute, resolute determination to be faithfully obedient to the Lord's instructions there is no point in trying to put on the rest of the armor. In fact it would not be possible.

a). In fact without the type resolution of Joshua and Caleb we will already be defeated, as Israel was, and we will already be looking back to Egypt - *Heb 6:9 ¶ But, beloved, we are confident of better things concerning you, yes, things that accompany salvation, though we speak in this manner.*

b). Now we should also note that this kind of resolve shown by Caleb and Joshua does not occur in a vacuum.

c). It comes as a result of an attitude of heart on their part.

d). Look what is recorded of Caleb - Jos 14:14 *Hebron therefore became the inheritance of Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite to this day, because he wholly followed the LORD God of Israel.*

e). Caleb was wholehearted in his faithful obedience to God – not half-hearted – and this cannot be separated from God’s revelation to the land, the calling and the inheritance.

f). In our understanding he was seeking the kingdom of God first.

g). And in relation to Joshua we read this in - Ex 33:11 *So the LORD spoke to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend. And he would return to the camp, but his servant Joshua the son of Nun, a young man, did not depart from the tabernacle.*

h). Again we see a wholehearted dedication and seeking after God.

i). What we see in these two men is a God focused lifestyle.

j). The word of God relating to His purpose for them was not just one of many things that occupied them. No – every aspect of their life was governed in a way to bring about the fulfillment of what God had promised.

17). As we stand at our spiritual Kadesh Barnea here this morning, let me ask you – ‘Are you a Joshua and Caleb or do you want to go back to Egypt and eat cucumbers?’

18). If you are a Joshua and Caleb, then buckle up the belt of truth and walk down to the front of this altar.

a). Exhort everyone to faithful obedience

b). Bitterness, unforgiveness, marriage seminar etc.