

Sunday April 30th, 2006

Spiritual Warfare Series part 10

The Sword of the Spirit – Part 1

1). 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, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, 15 and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; 16 above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. 17 And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; 18 praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints*

2). As this week we consider the Sword of the Spirit we will realize that this is part of our armor that is self explanatory – ‘the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God’.

- a). It may be interesting for us to note that we would not come to maturity, not reaching the point of ‘finally’ without the word of God.
- b). We could not have the belt of truth apart from the word of God
- c). Nor the breastplate of righteousness. Nor could our feet be shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace without it.
- d). The same is true for the shield of faith and the helmet of salvation.
- e). And yet here in our scripture it is specifically itemized, signifying that there is some truth attached to its mention that goes beyond the obvious.

3). Now I have heard taught, and had believed for a long time that the sword of the Spirit is the one offensive weapon that we are given within the description of the whole armor of God. Now a weapon of offense is one that we would use to strike our opponent.

- a). In the natural a fight using this kind of weaponry would result in the death of our opponent.

b). Within the context of our Ephesians scripture, and within the witness of scripture as a whole this is clearly not the case. This is not what the sword of the Spirit is for.

4). All of our armor, including the sword of the Spirit, is defensive. It is that which we use so that we may be 'strong in the Lord and the power of His might'.

a). Notice the clear evidence of our scripture in respect of the armor

i/ 'stand against the wiles of the devil' v 11

ii/ 'withstand in the evil day' v 13

iii/ 'having done all, to stand' v13

iv/ 'stand therefore' v 14

b). All these relate to standing firm – being grounded, steadfast, resolute, immovable. None of them speak of going on the offensive.

c). This is exactly what is taught elsewhere - Jas 4:7 *Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.*

d). We are to submit to God – be strong in the Lord and the power of His might.

e). Resist the devil – the word here translated 'resist' is the Greek word – *antihistemi* – which is the same word translated 'withstand' in Ephesians 6:13

f). 'and he will flee from you' – as we resist him – stand firm, be resolute, so he will flee from us.

g). We do not go after him.

5). We could really see our resisting, our standing firm, as the same thing as

a). Col 1:23 *if indeed you continue in the faith, grounded and steadfast, and are not moved away from the hope of the gospel which you heard,*

b). Heb 3:6 *but Christ as a Son over His own house, whose house we are if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm to the end.*

c). Heb 6:11 *And we desire that each one of you show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope until the end,*

d). Heb 10:23 *Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful.*

e). All of these demonstrate patient endurance, longsuffering, faithful obedience, thereby standing firm, over a protracted period of time.

i/ And in doing so we would overcome the world, the flesh and the devil

- ii/ To be recognized as overcomers at the Judgment Seat.
- iii/ Nowhere is to be found the language of an offensive action.

6). And this of course would be in perfect harmony with O/T typology

a). *1Sa 26:7 So David and Abishai came to the people by night; and there Saul lay sleeping within the camp, with his spear stuck in the ground by his head. And Abner and the people lay all around him. 8 Then Abishai said to David, "God has delivered your enemy into your hand this day. Now therefore, please, let me strike him at once with the spear, right to the earth; and I will not have to strike him a second time!" 9 And David said to Abishai, "Do not destroy him; for who can stretch out his hand against the LORD'S anointed, and be guiltless?" 10 David said furthermore, "As the LORD lives, the LORD shall strike him, or his day shall come to die, or he shall go out to battle and perish. 11 "The LORD forbid that I should stretch out my hand against the LORD'S anointed. But please, take now the spear and the jug of water that are by his head, and let us go."*

(Teach this)

b). As our scriptural type clearly teaches - *"The LORD forbid that I should stretch out my hand against the LORD'S anointed.*

c). We cannot stretch out our hand against our adversary, who remains the Lord's anointed until God sees fit to remove him, and remain guiltless.

7). So how are we to see our use of the sword of the Spirit? In terms of parrying the blows of the enemy.

8). This what we see in Christ's encounter with Satan in the wilderness.

a). *Mt 4:3 Now when the tempter came to Him, he said, "If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread." 4 But He answered and said, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.'" 5 Then the devil took Him up into the holy city, set Him on the pinnacle of the temple, 6 and said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down. For it is written: 'He shall give His angels charge over you,' and, 'In their hands they shall bear you up, Lest you dash your foot against a stone.'" 7 Jesus said to him, "It is written again, 'You shall not tempt the LORD your God.'" 8 Again, the devil took Him up on an exceedingly high mountain, and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. 9 And he said to Him, "All these things I will give You if You will fall down and worship me." 10 Then Jesus said to him, "Away with you, Satan! For it is written, 'You shall worship the*

LORD your God, and Him only you shall serve.'" 11 Then the devil left Him, and behold, angels came and ministered to Him.

b). What is so obvious in each of the instances recorded here is that Satan's tactic against Christ is exactly the same as that used against the Woman in the Garden – 'Has God indeed said?'

c). And in each instance we see Christ parrying the blow with the sword of the Spirit – 'It is written'.

d). Not once do we see Christ using the sword to challenge Satan's authority. Even though Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God, the second person of the Trinity, He does not assert that authority. He came –

i/ Ro 8:3.....*in the likeness of sinful flesh*

ii/ Heb 2:9 *But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels,*

iii/ And because of this being, 'a little lower than the angels', He acts in faithful obedience within the parameters that God has set in respect of this.

e). And here is the perfect example of submitting to God, resisting the devil and seeing him flee from you.

f). We do not need to shout, rail, jump up and down, throw around anointing oil, bind, cast out or assign to the bottomless pit – doing this we would not remain guiltless.

i/ Remembering that we too - Heb 2:7 *You have made him a little lower than the angels;*

g). Instead we are to stand firm, submitted to God and declare 'It is written' – Christ as always is our example.

9). There is coming a day however when the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God will strike the enemy of our souls and it will be a fatal blow, so to speak - Ge 3:15 *And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, And you shall bruise His heel."*

a). The bruising of the serpent's head will come at the appointed time. Through the Seed of the woman. But it isn't now. And it isn't at our hands.

b). Note how our Lord is described in that coming day -

i/ Re 1:16 *He had in His right hand seven stars, out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword, and His countenance was like the sun shining in its strength.*

ii/ Re 19:15 *Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations.*

c). And at the appointed time it will be the Sword of the Spirit, the Word of God, the Lord Jesus Christ Himself who will administer the final blow.

d). *Re 19:19 And I saw the beast, the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against Him who sat on the horse and against His army. 20 Then the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who worked signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image. These two were cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone. 21 And the rest were killed with the sword which proceeded from the mouth of Him who sat on the horse. And all the birds were filled with their flesh.*

e). *Re 20:7 Now when the thousand years have expired, Satan will be released from his prison 8 and will go out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle, whose number is as the sand of the sea. 9 They went up on the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city. And fire came down from God out of heaven and devoured them. 10 The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet are. And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.*

f). And our victory over the enemy of our souls must also wait for a time yet future. We must stand firm now, repulsing every attack that the enemy brings, and in this sense alone we are victorious in each individual battle in the present.

g). Only when we stand before Christ at His Judgment Seat, if we are adopted as firstborn sons, found worthy to be coheirs, can we then regard our victory over the present rulers of this world to be assured.

h). How we respond now in the battle will determine either our victory or defeat in that coming day.

10). But until then, we who remain, will take the sword of the Spirit which is the word of God to defend ourselves against the wiles of the devil.

a). ‘Has God indeed said’ will be his blow – ‘It is written’ will be our parry.

11). Can I impress upon us today that there is no greater power in the whole universe than the word of God?

12). Let us remember - *2Ti 3:16a All Scripture is given by inspiration of God.....*

- a). Inspiration = Greek word – *theopneustos* = the breath of God
- b). This is the same breath that breathed life into the inanimate Adam
 - i/ Ge 2:7 *And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.*
 - ii/ It is the same breath that brought us, who were dead in our trespasses and sins, from death unto life - Joh 5:24 *"Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life.*
 - iii/ 1Pe 1:23 *having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever,*
 - iv/ Joh 6:63 *"It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life.*
- c). It is this breath that framed the worlds - Heb 11:3 *By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible.*
- d). And upholds them even now - Heb 1:3 *who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power,*
- e). Notice even what God says about His word – Ps 138:2b..... *For You have magnified Your word above all Your name.*

13). We have then at our disposal a weapon of incredible power -

Heb 4:12 *For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword*

that we may use to defend ourselves against the premeditated, systematic attack of those who seek to stop us realizing the goal of our calling, thereby retaining their position of power and authority

a). I hope we begin to realize that God has given us this weapon of such power as He knows that we will need such a weapon if we are to stand against the wiles of the devil.

14). And I hope we also realize that this is not just the ability to quote scripture but a mature knowledge of the word in respect of the reason for our creation and the purpose of our salvation - Isa 28:9 ¶ *"Whom will he teach knowledge? And whom will he make to understand the message? Those just weaned from milk? Those just drawn from the breasts?"*

a). This sword is not for the untrained, again bringing us back to that point in our Ephesians 6 scripture – ‘Finally my brethren...’

b). Just as in the natural any swordsman would have an intimate knowledge of his weapon with respect to its weight, its balance, its strength – so in the spiritual, our sword, the word of God must be understood in the same way - Isa 28:10 *For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept, Line upon line, line upon line, Here a little, there a little."*

c). Scripture must be compared with scripture under the ministry of the Holy Spirit, guiding us into all truth, if our sword is to be properly used.

i/ 1Co 2:13 *These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual.*

d). Unless we are prepared to study scripture and study it in the way God has seen fit to give it to us – beginning in Genesis and building on that foundation, our use of the sword will more likely resemble Peter's use of a sword on the night of the Lord's arrest – we will swing it around in the dark cutting off someone's ear, finding ourselves out side the plan of God.

15). If we want to fully understand how the sword of the Spirit is to operate in our lives, so that we may look with confidence toward an absolute victory over our adversaries in that coming day, then there is much more that we need to consider in relation to this.

a). But that will have to wait until next week – if God permits.