

Sunday May 7th, 2006

Spiritual Warfare Series part 11

The Sword of the Spirit 2

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 we noted last week ‘the sword of the Spirit’ is the one piece of armor that is specifically identified – it is ‘the word of God’.

a). And as we also noted last week it is not the word in a general sense, but the word in a specific sense.

b). And given the context of the Book of Ephesians we are dealing with the word concerning the age to come and our inheritance to be realized in that time.

i/ Eph 1:11 *In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will,*

ii/ And of course the word concerning how we should conduct our lives in the present with a view to the inheritance yet future –

Eph 4:1 ¶ *I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called,*

c). The word of God then in a specific sense is that connected with the belt of truth – our having a Caleb/Joshua type attitude to the land of our calling and its inhabitants.

d). The breastplate of righteousness – walking in the good works that God has prepared beforehand for us with a view to being found worthy at the Judgment Seat.

e). The preparation of the gospel of peace – being fully secure in salvation by grace through faith – the free gift. And established in the gospel of the glory of Christ.

f). The shield of faith – believing and acting upon that which God has said concerning the land, the warfare, our inheritance and what we need to do to get there.

g). And the helmet of salvation – that surrounding the hope of salvation, the salvation to be revealed in the last time, the salvation of our souls.

h). And it is this word, that which God has said about our calling and our inheritance and our present conduct that we are to use to parry the blows of the enemy of our souls whose systematic and premeditated plan is to overthrow us from the goal of our calling. And using the sword of the Spirit to parry his blows moves beyond knowing scripture into lifestyle choice.

3). We also noted last week that the word of God and the spirit of God are one and the same, being God's breath – 2Ti 3:16 *All Scripture is given by inspiration of God,*

i/ our Greek word 'theopneustos'.

a). It is the 'theopneustos' of God alone that creates light and life where there was only once darkness and death - Eph 2:5 *even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved),*

i/ Eph 5:8 *For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light*

b). It is the Spirit of God alone that gives life, life does not come by any other means - 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). Such is the power of the sword we are given.

4). What we will realize then is that at our new birth the Spirit of God breathes life into that which was formally dead. Shining light into that which was once complete darkness, establishing a division between our soul and our spirit. That typified for us in - Ge 1:2 *The earth was without form, and void; and darkness was on the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. 3 ¶ Then God said, "Let there be*

light"; and there was light. 4 And God saw the light, that it was good; and God divided the light from the darkness.

a). The chaos and darkness we find here in Genesis are a result of Satan's rebellion. Darkness is the realm in which sin thrives and since the removal of 'the light of the world' 2000 years ago, this world is once again engulfed in darkness, remaining under the control of those who were responsible for the darkness in the first place - *the rulers of the darkness of this age*,

b). And since the time when the Woman was deceived in the Garden and Adam entered into that sin with her, all generations are born in the likeness of fallen Adam, in a state of sin, the subjects and slaves of the *spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places*.

c). Unable to be free apart from redemption

5). We would note then that darkness is associated with our first birth that is itself, being in the likeness of fallen Adam, inextricably linked to this world and the god of this world.

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.

a). *Eph 5:8 For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light*

b). *Eph 5:11 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.*

6). The antithesis between the light and the dark is patently obvious. The former produces life and the latter death.

a). At our new birth a light shone in the midst of our darkness.

b). Life came to that which was previously dead

c). From that point on we would have access to the spiritual truth of the word of God.

d). But as we know this is only a beginning. Just as day 1 in Genesis 1 represents our birth from above so days 2-6 represent the rest of our salvation experience.

i/ Having received the breath of life at our new birth so we are then admonished by scripture to be continually filled with the Spirit, to allow the breath of God to continually breathe into us, sustaining and building life

ii/ Eph 5:17 *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,*

e). Just as there was a division of light on day 1 followed by a further division between light and dark on the fourth day of Genesis 1, so there is to be a further division of light and dark in our own Christian experience - 2Co 4:6 *For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.*

f). The knowledge of the glory of God must of necessity relate to that time when the whole earth will be filled with His glory. A time remaining yet future. A time when God's plans and purposes for the rulership of the earth are brought to completion.

7). It is this very thing that the god of this world seeks to keep obscured 2Co 4:3 *But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, 4 whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them.*

(Teach as necessary)

a). The very thing that he hopes to turn us away from through deception, based entirely around the premise of 'Has God indeed said?' And the nature of this deception we can perhaps understand in the words of Christ - Joh 12:25 *"He who loves his life will lose it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal (Age Lasting) life.*

b). It is that choice between living according to the desires of our flesh, or living according to the Spirit - Ga 6:8 *For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting (Age Lasting) life.*

c). Look at the solution given in - Ro 13:11 ¶ *... knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep; for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed. 12 The night is far spent, the day is at hand. Therefore let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light. 13 Let us walk properly, as in the day, not in revelry and drunkenness, not in lewdness and lust, not in strife and envy. 14 But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts.*

d). What do we see here? We see casting off and putting on, we see action being taken in preparation, knowing the time, knowing that the night is far spent and the day is at hand, knowing that our salvation is nearer than when we first believed. We see a Christian clothed in the armor of light.

e). On the night of our Lord's betrayal we read - Joh 13:30 *Having received the piece of bread, he then went out immediately. And it was night.*

f). But that night which came with the removal of the light of the world is now far spent and the day, the seventh day, the day of rest, the Millennial Kingdom of Christ is at hand and its time to wake up.

8). I wonder if our scripture from Romans 13 reminds us of anything?

Mt 25:1 ¶ *"Then the kingdom of heaven shall be likened to ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. 2 "Now five of them were wise, and five were foolish. 3 "Those who were foolish took their lamps and took no oil with them, 4 "but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. 5 "But while the bridegroom was delayed, they all slumbered and slept. 6 "And at midnight a cry was heard: 'Behold, the bridegroom is coming; go out to meet him!' 7 "Then all those virgins arose and trimmed their lamps. 8 "And the foolish said to the wise, 'Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.' 9 "But the wise answered, saying, 'No, lest there should not be enough for us and you; but go rather to those who sell, and buy for yourselves.' 10 "And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding; and the door was shut. 11 "Afterward the other virgins came also, saying, 'Lord, Lord, open to us!' 12 "But he answered and said, 'Assuredly, I say to you, I do not know you.' 13 "Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour in which the Son of Man is coming.*

a). We know of course that these are all virgins, they are all Christians. The only distinction being made between them is that five have an extra supply of oil and five don't, five were properly prepared to meet the Bridegroom and five were not, resulting in five going into the wedding feast and five being excluded.

i/ They all heard the cry regarding midnight and all rose and trimmed their lamps, but only those with the extra supply of oil were properly prepared to navigate through the darkness, while awaiting the Bridegroom.

b). Those with the extra supply of oil, being properly prepared would be those who have followed the instructions given to Ruth in preparation for meeting Boaz - Ru 3:1 ¶ *Then Naomi her mother-in-law said to her, "My daughter, shall I not seek security for you, that it may be well with you?"*

2 "Now Boaz, whose young women you were with, is he not our relative? In fact, he is winnowing barley tonight at the threshing floor. 3 "Therefore wash yourself and anoint yourself, put on your best garment and go down to the threshing floor; but do not make yourself known to the man until he has finished eating and drinking. 4 "Then it shall be, when he lies down, that you shall notice the place where he lies; and you shall go in, uncover his feet, and lie down; and he will tell you what you should do." 5 And she said to her, "All that you say to me I will do."

c). We see here faithful obedience on the part of Ruth to the instructions given to her. And we must also see the five wise virgins as faithfully obedient also. These instructions can be seen, in part, as the same as those given in our Romans 13 scripture – cast off, put on – let us walk properly as in the day.

d). And we must realize that faithful obedience is not just continuing to believe what God has said, but translating that belief into action. Doing what the word says in order to be prepared for the Judgment that is coming. 'All that you say to me I will do'

9). And it is the extra supply of oil of the five virgins which equates with the preparations of Ruth that we can see as the sword of the Spirit. That which God has said about our calling, our inheritance and our preparations to meet the Bridegroom, the Kinsman Redeemer, the Lord Jesus Christ.

a). Quite simply, to parry the blows of our enemy as he challenges God's word, specifically in relation to proper preparation for meeting our Lord at His Judgment Seat, requires the sword to be moved in action. Our parrying of the enemy's blows is not in quoting scripture at him, but putting into practice that which the scripture says. And it is in this sense that we could possibly view the sword of the Spirit as an offensive weapon, not by striking our enemy, but by living in accordance with the commands of Christ, thereby assuring our victory over the world, the flesh and the devil.

b). Faith must be brought to its goal if the salvation of our soul is to be realized and this cannot happen apart from putting into action that which we have believed - Jas 2:20 *But do you want to know, O foolish man, that faith without works is dead? 21 Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered Isaac his son on the altar? 22 Do you see that faith was working together with his works, and by works faith was made perfect?*

23 And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, "Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness." And he was called the friend of God. 24 You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only.

1Pe 1:9 receiving the end of your faith--the salvation of your souls.

c). And faith being brought to its goal is something we must see in the five wise virgins and this must be connected to the extra supply of oil.

d). It is something that would have to be a reality for those wearing the whole armor of God, the armor of light, and would necessitate the proper use of the sword of the Spirit - Jas 1:22 *But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.*

10). Inevitably again we see the absolute necessity of being properly engaged with the word. It is only the word that will properly direct us through the darkness that surrounds us - Ps 119:105 ¶ NUN. *Your word is a lamp to my feet And a light to my path.*

a). It is only the light, the word, that can expose the works of darkness, which can expose the lie and replace it with the truth.

b). And it is only taking the word and acting upon it, using it as the sword of the Spirit, that will see us properly prepared for our coming meeting with our Bridegroom.

c). Eph 6:18 *praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints*

d). We need to be continually praying to this end not only for ourselves, but for all the saints and to remain watchful with all perseverance. We cannot afford to let our guard down, not now that we are so close.

e). We need to take seriously the admonition - Ro 12:2 *And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.*

f). And it may be interesting for us to note that the word translated 'transformed' is the same word translated 'transfigured' in Mt 17:2 *and He was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became as white as the light.*

i/ Note shone like the sun, white as light.

g). It was a flaming sword that guarded the way to the tree of life from fallen man in the past and it will be the sword of the spirit, a sword of light that will grant redeemed man access to that tree in the future.