

***The 7-Fold Excellencies of the Mystery:
“Our Heavenly & Spiritual Warfare Under Grace”
Part 3***

Review

Last time we continued this fellowship in the Seventh Excellency of the Sacred Secret revealed to and through apostle Paul, Our Heavenly and Spiritual Warfare.

Questions up front were asked, some of which I think were answered in the course of our fellowships here:

- ***What Our Heavenly & Spiritual Warfare Under Grace IS:***

Eph. 6:11-15

11 Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

12 For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.

13 Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God,

...

17b ... and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God,

...and pray even ...

19 ... for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel,

- ***What a statement indeed this is regarding our heavenly & spiritual warfare. Note that the key word of this revelation, the word “mystery”, is found here in our central scripture passage for this doctrine in Ephesians chapter 6 and verse 19! This indicates that the revelation concerning spiritual warfare through Paul is “different” in some critically important ways from that given in other parts of the Scriptures.***
- ***So, indeed, we must conclude that there are critical dispensational issues to be understood here. What the false teachers are often promoting and what Satan therefore is directing and energizing in this dark world is what is contrary to what God is actually doing (for otherwise Satan would be***

acting against his own interests and he does not do that. (Luke 11:18).

- **What Our Heavenly & Spiritual Warfare Under Grace IS NOT:**

2 Thess. 2:6-7, 9-10:

6 And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time.

7 For **the mystery of iniquity doth already work**: only he who now letteth [will let], until he be taken out of the way.

...

9 [Satan's Antichrist] ". . . whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders,

10 And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.

- **The "wiles of the devil" were revealed in Eph. 6. Some more details are given here in 2 Thess. 2. We also have a reference in 2 Cor. 10:4:**

(For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;)

- **We must know what Satan's lies and his work are if we would be effective in spiritual warfare against him. It is important to realize also that in order to be believable (as far as believers are concerned, at least) it is most important that they appear to be "biblical", though often God's Word is taken out of context and applied in ways so misleading. This is so clearly revealed in Satan's temptations of our Lord as recorded in Matt. 4, where Satan interprets and applies the scripture wrongly as our Lord makes so clear there in his defense.**
 - **And, in addition, as you might expect, Satan's use of scripture is not dispensationally correct.**
 - **So, when we add purely worldly and religious teaching to the mix, we have a package that may be widely accepted. And this is exactly what Satan is doing today.**
- **In our last two fellowships we focused mainly on the "teaching" found in Eph. 6 and in 2 Thess. 2. Today we will mainly focus on the "application" to our current lives.**

I. The Simplicity of Our Spiritual Warfare Under the Abundance of Grace

[REREAD] Eph. 6:11-15

11 Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

12 For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.

13 Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

14 Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness;

15 And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace;

[REREAD] Eph. 6:16-19

16 Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.

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, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;

19 And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel

- **I still, after so many years of reading and studying this section of this great epistle, find these words to be absolutely astounding. Today, under grace, the guidance here on spiritual warfare is clear. The key to our victory is, in the last analysis, in our utterance of the mystery or sacred secret of the gospel of grace, just like it was for the apostle Paul.**
- **The enemy is identified in verse 11 - “The wiles of the devil” & “but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world [age]” : Who is our enemy? That is answered here: our enemy is Satan himself and so many others, all spiritual foes in the heavenlies and all aligned against us.**
- **Now, how our warfare is to be waged, defensively: Verses 13-17a-**

These are all spiritual and defensive AND are all based on the finished work of Christ in shedding his blood for our sins. They are all about therefore what has already been secured for us, what is already true, what we have “in Christ”, positionally!

- ***Then, how our warfare is to be waged, offensively: Verses 17b-20: Today, under grace, the guidance here on spiritual warfare is clear. The key [offensively] is the utterance of the mystery or sacred secret of the gospel of grace.***
- ***In summary”: Satan is working AGAINST this so beware. Success is “standing” against the enemy! It is that simple. No details are given before this so we do not need to know more. In another dispensation it would be far different, perhaps, and many other tools and techniques would have been needed.***

Since Satan’s greatest enemy today is clearly the full manifestation of the grace of God -- it is that grace, that great work of almighty God today in the hearts of God’s elect, that Satan fights against consistently and constantly with great fervor.

If Satan can bring into our minds and hearts his rebellious spirit through confusion and uncertainty concerning our proper spiritual warfare today, then he will surely do just that, and we see in our next scripture passage exactly how he works to do that, through “all power and signs and lying wonders”...

[Your thoughts?]

II. Confusion Manifested as Satan Works His Miraculous & Lying Deceptions

- ***In our last fellowship we considered WHAT OUR SPIRITUAL WARFARE TODAY IS NOT. This teaching may seem a little subtle or difficult to you because of its wording here, so bear with me, I ask, as we go through this again. We really must be careful here to gain an understanding that is without doubt or confusion, for that is what Satan would desire. And all around us we find the seeds for that confusion in Satan’s worldly and religious system. And even in the churches lying wonders often reign supreme to the great detriment***

of the saints of God.

[READ] 2 Thess. 2:6-7

6 And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time.

7 For **the mystery of iniquity doth already work**: only he who now letteth [will let], until he be taken out of the way.

[READ] 2 Thess. 2:8-10

8 And then shall that **Wicked be revealed**, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming:

9 **[Satan's Antichrist] ". . . whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders,**

10 And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.

- *These verses in 2 Thess. 2 contain what I might call the "prototype" of the Pauline teaching regarding the dispensational contrasts between the Pauline teaching concerning our heavenly warfare and the teachings of our Lord for Israel and the twelve apostles. Those kingdom-oriented teachings are very different indeed from what Paul wrote to the churches and the differences should never be forgotten.*

It makes all the difference to know who the enemy is and what his work is in the current day. Satan's work then determines what authentic spiritual warfare is. It is really that simple.

- *Satan's deception for our day is working full time - it is called the "mystery of lawlessness" here in 2 Thess. 2:7. It is called a "mystery" here because this working of Satan today, under grace, cannot be known apart from the revelation of God here. This is dispensational teaching and cannot be understood except by Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth.*
- *The Line Then Has Been Drawn: Satan's work today under this "mystery" working in signs and miracles (or just the enemy's psychologically compelling and often repeated phrase "we must not limit God", for example), is a deceptive and especially evil means of convincing those with itching ears that some much needed and new revelation from God is finally available. This is of course outside the realm of Biblical revelation and often explicitly contrary to the*

Pauline revelation for the Body of Christ. The special gifts of “wisdom” and “knowledge” have also passed away as has the gift of “apostleship”. So seeking these things or special experiences or “messages” as if directly from God is not a godly endeavor at all, but dancing with demons, as it were.

- ***Nothing could be clearer but that Satan’s Working Today is Designed to Distract Us From God’s Abundant Grace!***
 - ***This tells us how Satan worked before and how he will work in the future - but what about today? He wants to exalt himself by working contrary to the grace of God. So his number one target always must be the word of grace, the gospel itself AND the Pauline teachings regarding the life we have been so privileged to live under and in the sphere of that grace.***
 - ***So the dispensational contrast is clear as Paul is stating in 2 Thess. 2. The Holy Spirit today is simply NOT WORKING as he was at that time. Why? Because the entire dispensational focus of God has changed from the law of the coming Kingdom to the unbounded grace of God through the completed sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ.***
 - ***But, confusion is Satan’s game - that way our works, most religious indeed, may be energized by our flesh or by the world and Satan himself.***
 - ***Indeed, many things had dramatically changed:***
 - ***Paul’s healing gifts have passed away, it seems: “Erastus abode at Corinth: but Trophimus have I left at Miletum sick.” 2 Tim. 4:21***
 - ***And, we know the gifts would have been ceasing that had been abundantly working in Corinth at least for some time as a witness to the Jews that they might be made jealous.***
 - ***Wine for Timothy’s stomach and his continuing health***

[Your comments / questions?]

III. Confusion Multiplied as Satan Draws Together the World Religions

- **Some of these Satanic teachings may be identified as follows:**
 - ***Pentecostalism and the newer charismatic movement including the “new” apostolic reformation movement with accompanying signs and wonders and “words” as if directly from God (and, it is testified, from angels), and so called Dominion / liberation theology, Endtime renewal with Geographical and strategic spiritual warfare***
 - ***Laying on of hands for miraculous gifts, usually with ceremonial or sacramental oils and waters for physical and spiritual cleansing / healing / etc. -- anointings and baptisms***
 - ***The authoritative recitation of certain words or of the Lord’s name (or standardized prayers)***
 - ***The whole concept of demonic possession (for believers, of course unbelievers may be possessed) and the techniques and methods for deliverance (casting out, etc.)***
 - ***Meditation & contemplative prayer, all quite the center focus of many rapidly growing movements within Christendom today (“emergent” church, for example) - focus on special “personal” experiences.***
 - ***Note well that all of these require an “authoritative and unquestioned additional word from heaven”, beyond what has already been provided and preserved in scripture (although, revealed scripture is not and will never be enough for many with “itching ears”).***
- ***Many popular books containing anecdotal stories and now even movies abound (“Heaven is for Real”, and “The Shack” are examples)***
- ***Finally, what is simply “pagan” though it may be promoted by well known leaders of denominations, of church organizations, or by seminary professors. The so-called “new age spirituality” is being***

promoted everywhere in the churches even, as pagan religion has been welcomed by Christian leaders for so many years now.

IV. The Simple Message for Today: Be Bold with the Utterance of the Spirit

- ***Matt. 4, by way of example***
- ***The promise to Abraham that changed everything - Cp. Gal. 3:16***
- ***Martin Luther's great hymn and its Eph. 6 example of truth. "A little word will fell him"***
- ***And so, according to Eph. 6: by the utterance of the word of truth, we also shall be victorious in our spiritual warfare.***
 - ***Eph. 6:17*** And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God:
 - ***Eph. 6:19*** And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel,

Conclusions & Exhortation

- ***Beloved, the signs, wonders and miracle workers of all kinds are the instruments of Satan. Beware! The mystery of lawlessness is already working! BE PAULINE! And never fail to Rightly Divide the Word of Truth!***
- ***Satan will always work to confuse us and the world, to take to focus away from God's word of truth.***
- ***But, ah, the simplicity of our spiritual warfare, under grace.***
- ***Be bold and stand, RESTING IN HIS ALL SUFFICIENT AND ABOUNDING GRACE. This is our heavenly calling -- and our heavenly warfare under grace! Amen.***