

**The 7-Fold Excellencies of the Mystery:
“Our Heavenly & Spiritual Warfare Under Grace”
Part 2**

Review

Last time we began our fellowship around 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 our fellowship last time:

- **What it IS**
 - **What is spiritual warfare in general, how would we define it?**
 - **Consider that the key word of this revelation, “mystery”, is found here in 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.**
 - **And, does this change mean that those who are saved but in rebellion against Paul are in a very weakened position spiritually, since they cannot wage spiritual warfare successfully?**
- **So in our last meeting we saw what our spiritual warfare IS TODAY under grace from Eph. 6:**

#1: The Spiritual Warfare according to the Mystery - Who is the Opposition?

Eph. 6:10-12

10 Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.

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.

- **Verse 11: “The wiles of the devil”: Our primary enemy of course, is Satan himself. But he has a lot of support, doesn’t he . . .**
- **Verse 12: “but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world [age]” - and he that are. So many**

are aligned against us.

- *The battles are real and they are spiritual - in the heavenlies! If we do not understand who the enemy is, how can we be victorious in battle?? That is the question. But, we are not left without the proper armaments for war. God Almighty has outfitted us well as Eph. 6 has outlined.*

#2: The Spiritual Warfare according to the Mystery - The Warfare is Heavenly Indeed But We are So Well Equiped by Almighty God

Eph. 6:12-13:

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.

- *So successful spiritual warfare is always to be based on the whole armor of God. There is both the defensive part (verses 14-17a) and the offensive part (verse 17b):*

#3: The Spiritual Warfare according to the Mystery - Our Defensive Armor is Outlined

Eph. 6:14-17a

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

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

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

17a And take the helmet of salvation,

- *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*

These are not and in no way can exalt our works or our obedience therefore. They are all to be appropriated by faith and that is the exhortation here.

#4: The Spiritual Warfare according to the Mystery - It Is All About the Words! All About the Word of God - Rightly Divided

Eph. 6:17b-20

17b 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,

20 For which I am an ambassador in bonds: **that therein I may speak boldly**, as I ought to speak.

- ***In summary, the simplicity of this is astounding. Today, under grace, the guidance here on spiritual warfare is clear. The key is the utterance of the mystery or sacred secret of the gospel of grace.***

Introduction

- ***In our last fellowship we considered WHAT OUR SPIRITUAL WARFARE TODAY IS. Today we will consider WHAT OUR SPIRITUAL WARFARE TODAY IS NOT:***
 - ***To begin with, there is every kind of spiritual error being propagated by both Christian and religious leaders. It has always been so, right?***
 - ***As we shall see, to a great degree, this is a dispensational issue. 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)***
 - ***For Satan's lies 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. 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 mix, we have a package that may***

be widely accepted. And this is exactly what Satan is doing today.

- *This dispensational contrast was where we left off last time. We shall consider that today for it is very important for our understanding.*
- *Some of these Satanic teachings may be identified as follows (and we will not look at these today -- we will say much more in our next fellowship on this subject, Lord willing):*
 - *Doctrines / practices*
 - *Pentecostalism and the newer charismatic movement including the “new” apostolic reformation movement with accompanying signs and wonder and “words” as if directly from God*
 - *Dominion / liberation theology, Endtime renewal*
 - *Geographical and strategic spiritual warfare*
 - *Laying on of hands for miraculous gifts*
 - *Oils and waters for physical and spiritual cleansing / healing / etc. -- anointings and baptisms*
 - *Meditation & contemplative prayer, all quite the center focus of many rapidly growing movements within Christendom today (“emergent” church, for example)*
 - *Many popular books containing anecdotal stories and now even movies abound (“Heaven is for Real”)*
- *Finally, what is simply “pagan” though it may be promoted by well known leaders of denominations, of church organizations, or by seminary professors.*

I. Satan’s Secret Substitute - Its Dispensational Contrast Stated (in Paul’s Letters)

2 Thess. 2:6-10: The explanation is found here of current events, spiritually speaking (Satan’s work in particular): This is in fact one dimension of The Mystery or Sacred Secret, never before revealed!

These verses 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.

- ***[READ] 2 Thess. 2:3-4***

3 Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first [the rapture], and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition;

4 Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is 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.

- ***A(very literal) translation of verse 7: “For the sacred secret is already operating, the lawless one, only [there is] the one constraining now until being [taken] out of the midst”***
- ***This sacred secret in verse 7 is that in this current dispensation of grace there will be a working of Satan using signs, wonders and miracles somewhat like that which will occur in the Tribulation period. At that future time Satan will use these Messianic signs to confirm himself as the Christ (but he will be really, the anti- or substitute Christ).***
- ***The apostle says here that a similar work of Satan was “already” working at the time in which he was writing. But he writes that although this working is present, it is constrained or limited. This explains the origin and source of at least some of the seemingly miraculous signs and wonders occasionally seen in this dispensational period of God's grace.***
 - ***They are NOT the working of God after all, but the working of Satan. Since these are not now a working of God but a working of Satan, they can have no spiritual value, but are only damaging spiritually. These movements always emphasize feelings and “experience” over true faith in the gracious promises of God for us members of the Body of Christ.***

[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.

- ***But, he writes here, when "that which is restraining" is removed, then Satan can proceed with his own plan for mankind - and so he will.***
- ***Two "comings" are identified here:***
 - ***"Whose coming" - that "wicked" or "lawless" one who is after the working of Satan" - he is energized by Satan himself as the father of lies, especially spiritually***
 - ***The Lord's "coming", bright indeed, to destroy Satan and his workers - this is the second coming of Christ at the end of the Great Tribulation***
- ***"All power and signs and lying wonders" - these are his techniques used to deceive the world AND BELIEVERS TODAY!***
- ***"With all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish" -***
 - ***"because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved" - today, OR IN THE TRIBULATION!***
- ***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***

[Your Comments / Questions?]

II. Satan's Secret Substitute - Its Dispensational Contrast Supported (in the Gospels as well as in the Old Testament)

- ***Signs, wonders, and miracles were the order of the day in our Lord God's witness to Israel. And, this was still true in Paul's Acts ministry when he went "to the Jew first", and, the Gentiles were also part of this, but in a very different way, for "the Jews seek signs but***

the Gentiles wisdom” AND God gave even Gentiles these miraculous blessings to make Israel jealous (Rom. 10:19; 11:11; 15:27)

- *But they are not the order of the current day. Paul, in the book of Acts, does show by way of his apostolic authority a great many examples of miraculous power. But this is regarding Israel and the Jews in nearly all cases (except as noted). Once Israel is set aside at the very end of the book of Acts, most of these supernatural manifestations begin to disappear immediately exactly as Paul said they would in 1 Cor. 13. That began to occur as (1) the witness to Israel ended; (2) the word of grace was completed; and, finally, (3) the apostolic authority of Paul and others ended with their deaths or martyrdoms.*

- *The Witness by Our Lord toward Israel concerning the coming Kingdom*

[READ] Mark 1:14-15 Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel.

⇒ *Repentance required and central to the gospel message preached. The kingdom gospel preaching was certified by signs, wonders and miracles; BOTH the message and the messenger were authenticated by signs and wonders -- BECAUSE Israel was God's focus through all of this period.*

[READ] Luke 7:22 Then Jesus answering said unto them, Go your way, and tell John what things ye have seen and heard; how that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, to the poor the gospel is preached. [see also Mk. 1:34 & Mt. 4:23; 9:35, and Lk. 7:22]

Again, signs, wonders and miracles accompany and this was passed on to the 12 apostles as well...

[READ] Luke 9:1-2

1 Then he called his twelve disciples together, and gave them power and

authority over all devils, and to cure diseases.

2 And he sent them to preach the kingdom of God, and to heal the sick.

- ***The Witness toward Israel starting at Pentecost concerning the coming Kingdom (after Christ's death and resurrection) - this is for all believers beginning at Pentecost***

[READ] Mark 16:14-20 “Afterward he appeared unto the eleven as they sat at meat, and upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them which had seen him after he was risen. And he said unto them, ***Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover. So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God. And they went forth, and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following.*** Amen.”

⇒ ***Faith PLUS a work, baptism, were required for salvation***

Signs & wonders were also accompanying the preaching of this gospel

But notice that the last verse says clearly that this WAS ACCOMPLISHED at that time! This is because of the Holy Spirit who was poured out upon the believers.

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.

[Your Comments / Questions?]

III. Satan's Secret Substitute - Signs, Wonders and Miracles Counterfeited for Today, Under Grace

- **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...

Conclusions & Exhortation

- **Remember: To begin with, there is every kind of spiritual error being propagated by both Christian and religious leaders. It has always been so, right?**
 - **However, to a very large degree, as we have been seeing here, this is a dispensational issue. 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)**
 - **For Satan's lies to be believable it is most effective when they appear to be "biblical", but are not in fact dispensationally correct!! So, when we add purely worldly and religious teaching to this mix, we have a package that may be widely accepted. And this is exactly what Satan is doing today so successfully today.**
- **As we have seen today, the dispensational contrast is very critical to our understanding. That is why Paul so often emphasizes that (remember 1 Thess. 5, 2 Thess. 2, and 1 Cor. 15 in regard to the Rapture of the Church?)**
- **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!**