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C0522 -- June 1, 2005 – Ephesians 6:12-13 – Our Enemies: Wicked Comic Powers

Let's review our introduction to the Reality of Spiritual Warfare from last week. Two Realms of Battle. Israel's primary battlefield is the earth and she has earthly enemies that are fighting for a specific Real Estate known as the Promised Land. Her enemies are depraved Gentile nations and the Fallen Angels.

However, in Ephesians the story is a bit different. The Church's battlefield is in the heavenlies and our enemies are fighting for the souls of men. Our enemies are therefore not of flesh and blood but are Fallen Angels.

Reality of Spiritual Warfare. There are two lines of thought about the spirit world. 1) Those who reject its existence and 2) those who accept its existence. Those who reject the existence of the spirit world are naturalists. They believe that everything that exists is composed of material and is empirically observable or quantifiable. For the most part, any naturalist thinks all phenomena can be explained by natural law (physical, chemical or biological processes). There is no need for a god or gods behind the universe. The universe is an impersonal mechanical system governed. I showed you last week that the actual source of this lie was a spirit being originally named Lucifer, now fallen known as Satan or the Devil (*diabolos*). One of the greatest deceptions Satan ever pulled on mankind was the foolish idea that the spirit world doesn't exist. The second view is composed of people who accept the existence of the spirit world. These people normally think there are gods or goddesses behind what the evolutionists consider natural processes (e.g. rain god, harvest god, love god, et al.) It is significant that in this respect, these tribal people are more advanced than their modern western counterpart. Yet, they too believe in an evolutionary system of thought. Really, these two viewpoints dovetail into worldviews that are both polytheistic and evolutionary. They may have different gods but no one is free from any gods whatsoever. The question is not whether people believe in a god or gods, but who or what are their gods? To ascertain just who their god or gods are we simply listen carefully

to our friends to uncover their ultimate commitments. To who or what idea are they most committed? This is a person's god. What Christianity is saying is that both of these ideas are wrong concerning the spirit world. Our evolutionary friends are ignorant of their existence. Our tribal friends are ignorant of their destructive power. Only the word of God gives us the true perspective. That there are good and evil spirit beings behind the natural forces. These all sit under God's ultimate authority. They are not gods but created beings and they function in many capacities in the universe. There is a real battle going on beyond mankind's perceptive abilities. These spirit beings are more powerful than humans and are created immortals. The Bible tells Christians that Jesus Christ defeated the fallen angels on the cross and how we are to stand against such creatures who are our vile enemies.

Verse 10 reads, **Finally, be strengthened in the Lord, that is, in the might of His strength.** **Finally** signals that these are Paul's closing words in the letter. **Finally, be strengthened in the Lord.** Our strength comes from the Lord. He is the source of the strength necessary to hold Christ's ground and stand against the strategies of the devil. **be strengthened in the Lord, that is, in the might of His strength.** Two words used here to explain the Lord's strength, *kratos* and *ischus*. *ischus* refers to Christ's inherent strength and *kratos* refers to the demonstration of His strength. As Christian soldiers we are to continually be being strengthened by the inherent strength of Christ working through us to stand against the strategies of the devil, the topic of verse 11.

Put on all the armor of God, in order that you might have the ability to stand against the strategies of the devil: **Put on** is a command from your Military General, Jesus Christ. What are we to put on? **All the armor of God.** We normally say, **the full armor of God.** This is not your own armor but the **armor of God.** We need His armor to protect against the wicked powers of darkness. What this pictures is that the Christian soldier takes each piece of armor up, mounts it on his person and prepares for conflict. Why? **in order that you might have the ability to stand against the strategies of the devil.** To guard Christ's territory we need to **stand against the methodology, the strategies of the devil.** The devil is an advanced military tactician and you must have put on the **full armor of God in order to stand against these strategies.** The **devil** is a *diabolic* creature. Internally he is filled with violence and destruction. Your mother in law is not your number one enemy, Satan is. He is a very powerful creature but a creature nonetheless. This means he can be defeated but He can only be defeated by wearing the armor of the Creator. Importantly, last week we looked at one of three basic strategies. Let's finish reporting on these basic strategies. If the devil can deceive you by His strategies then you will give the Devil a place or position of attack against the body of Christ. His strategies are not easy to detect, they require

advanced knowledge of Bible doctrine so you will not be swept away by what is falsely called knowledge.

3 Basic Strategies of the Devil. The first basic strategy of the devil is “false doctrine” or the spreading of “lies”. He is the father of lies so we should not be surprised that he uses this strategy. The example we used was that of the Danish existential philosopher, Soren Kierkegaard. Kierkegaard is known as “the father of all modern thought” both secular and religious. He made a total separation between faith and knowledge so that meaning and significance can only be reached by a leap of faith and you yourself determine your own meaning and significance. These things cannot be known or even expressed verbally. Abraham made a “leap of faith” when he offered Isaac as a sacrifice. This separation of faith from rationality or knowledge was applied to theology by Karl Barth who is the “father of neo-orthodox theology.” For Barth, and many Christians today, God is wholly beyond us. He cannot be known through a mere human book such as the Bible. Conservative Christians are chided for worshipping the Bible rather than the God of the Bible but insomuch they separate God from His word and ultimately say God can only be known by a mystical personal encounter. This is heresy of the vilest sort. Sounds good to many Christians who seek a personal verification of their faith but deeply antithetical to Christianity. So, the first strategy of Satan is to spreading of “false doctrine” or “lies”.

The second strategy of Satan is “confusion”. The father of lies loves to cause confusion among believers. There are two basic tactics involved in the strategy of confusion. First keep Christians ignorant of Bible doctrine. He may keep you too busy to study Bible doctrine. Or a more deceptive technique involves the previous “leap of faith” which we discussed. If you buy into the “leap of faith” mentality then you will not think that Bible study is the essential component to coming to know God since the Bible can’t communicate who God really is anyway. Therefore you will not study the Bible but seek mystical encounters which will cause you to become more and more confused, tossed about by every wind of doctrine. Biblically, and in my experience, it is impossible to stay afloat and stable as a Christian when you take an anti-intellectual approach to God? How can you discern truth from error when you don’t know anything? If you’ve been taught that Christianity is just a subjective religious experience then you’re not going to take the time to intellectually engage the word of God and this is exactly what Satan wants. He doesn’t want you to think through the word of God because he knows that when you do the word of God will give you the ability to escape and avoid confusion. God is the author of clarity but Satan is the author of confusion. If you are one of those Christians who thinks there are a lot of gray areas then you have been deceived. Satan has you confused. It’s a black and white issue...there are *ultimately* no gray areas. A second and similar tactic under this strategy is

to give you the idea that we can't understand the word of God, that there are many interpretations to that and we just can't know. For example, inspiration and inerrancy of Scripture, what the end-times will look like, creation vs. evolution, etc...How often have you heard believers say that we really can't know about these issues, the Bible isn't clear. Really? Once again, people who doubt that we can understand or know haven't been reading the Bible very carefully. Ultimately, this tactic of Satan leads believers into the concept that "God mutters. God doesn't speak clearly. God doesn't know how to communicate with His creatures." This is absurd. God speaks clearly in creation, conscience, and particularly, in the word of God. Just because professing Christians stand on opposite sides of an issue or have different views does not mean that God has not been clear. What it means is that Satan has created confusion in the church.

The third strategy is "counterfeit". Satan wants you to buy into imitations of the real thing. Satan is a master counterfeiter.

2 Corinthians 11:13-15 ¹³ For such men are false apostles, deceitful workers, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. ¹⁴ No wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. ¹⁵ Therefore it is not surprising if his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness, whose end will be according to their deeds.

Dr Barnhouse said,

"One of Satan's greatest stratagems has been the attempt to keep men in ignorance of the real nature of his being and the fraudulent dimensions of his pretensions."ⁱ

Satan is a destroyer. He hates human life and He wants to murder and destroy it. Because people don't know his real nature they make the terrible assumption that error will be obvious. But if Satan is an angel of light then this means his counterfeits look like light but are actually darkness. For example, Satan's deceptions often come in the form of 99% truth and 1% error. But it's that 1% that is deadly. 99.95% of rat poison is good food; it's the .05% that will kill you. This kind of counterfeit is what deceives many people. So much of it sounds so good. For example, there is quite a bit of truth in Roman Catholicism but where it really counts there is error. They mix faith with works but hide this by covering it under the name of grace. They exalt Mary to the level of Co-redemptrix so that it is not Christ alone who saves but Mary also whom Her Son cannot deny. The Pope is called the Vicar of Christ (Christ's substitute on earth) is substituted for the true vicar of Christ, the Holy Spirit. The Pope is also the source of infallibility and inerrancy rather than the Scripture.

He supposedly speaks *in cathedra* and *ex cathedra* infallibly. So, Roman Catholicism is a religious counterfeit. It is another gospel, it denies Christ's substitutionary work on the cross, the work of the Holy Spirit, denies biblical authority, and warps the doctrine of grace. Satan is a master counterfeiter. As always, the key to detecting the counterfeit is knowing the original. You have to train yourself to keep your eyes on the text of Scripture. If you don't know the truth you will never be able to detect the deception. Satan has many counterfeits. It is interesting that when God sent apostles and prophets Satan countered by sending false apostles and false prophets. When God sent a by grace through faith gospel and Satan counterfeited with sending false gospels into the world. Paul even foresaw this and warned against it when he said,

Galatians 1:8-9 ⁸ But even if we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to what we have preached to you, he is to be accursed! ⁹ As we have said before, so I say again now, if any man is preaching to you a gospel contrary to what you received, he is to be accursed!

When God did many signs and wonders to authenticate His message and messengers and Satan countered by doing signs and wonders to deceive people (2 Thess 2:8). This will become even more deceptive during the Tribulation when Satan indwells the Antichrist and counterfeits the resurrection (Rev 13). He will also counterfeit the Trinity during the Tribulation (Rev 16:13-14). He is a master counterfeiter and the only way you will be able to detect it is to keep your eyes on the truth (e.g. Airplane Pilots and Gauges).

So, we are in a spiritual warfare. And I hope you realize that the major thrust of all of Satan's strategies is in the realm of ideas. Ideas give motivation and necessitate action. We are called to put on the full armor of God and stand against these ideas. Christ already conquered the territory and when He did so He gave us every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies and now we are called to defend. Satan and the Demons are real beings who have highly developed military tactics operating primarily through the channel of ideas, designed to poison God's peoples and destroy God's plan.

Let's conclude with the Christians defense mechanism against Satan's strategies.

2 Corinthians 10:3-5 For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, ⁴ for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses. ⁵ *We are* destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and *we are* taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ,

The Christian defense is Christ-centered knowledge in every area of life. Operating on the principle that Christ created all, owns all, knows all, and if we are to operate correctly we have to think about all of reality in terms of Christ. With this knowledge we have the ability to destroy the speculative philosophies of the world and challenge the world with the gospel of Christ. These false ideas are viewed as fortresses and we destroy these fortresses by taking in Bible doctrine, teaching it to others, thereby spreading Christian influence.

Greek Text 6:12 *o[ti ouvk e;stin h`mi/n h` pa,lh pro.j ai-ma kai. sa,rka avlla. pro.j ta.j avrca,j(pro.j ta.j evxousi,aj(pro.j tou.j kosmokra,toraj tou/ sko,touj tou,tou(pro.j ta. pneumatika. th/j ponhri,aj evn toi/j evpourani,oij*

Translation 6:12 because our struggle is not against flesh and blood but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers of this darkness, against the spiritual beings of wickedness in the heavenlies.

First, let's look at the word **ruler**. It's the Greek word *arche* (from which we get hierarchy) and it usually refers to the "beginning of time" (e.g. John 1:1) but it can also refer to "rank or position". That's the way it's being used here. The *arche* has a high rank in the angelic realm. He is therefore called a **ruler**.

The second word is translated **authority** and it's the Greek word *exousia*. *exousia* is used in the NT of the apostle's relationship to Christ. The apostles were delegated *authority* by Christ. Of course, while on earth, Christ was delegated His authority from God the Father so that we have a three-tiered hierarchy. See, the apostles were in the third tier and were delegated tasks to complete in His power. Christ decided that they would carry out His will (e.g. 2 Cor. 10:18) which was the will of the Father. So, *exousia* refers to a third class angel who has been delegated authority by the *arche*, the chief **rulers**.

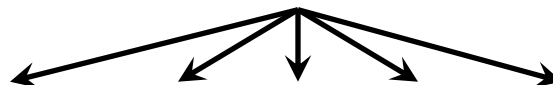
1st Class Fallen Angel

DEVIL



2nd Class Fallen Angels

RULERS



3rd Class Fallen Angels

AUTHORITIES

So, when a third of the angels fell (Rev 12:) the 1st Class Fallen Angel, the Devil appointed certain fallen angels to 2nd Class Fallen Angels known as **rulers** (*arche*) and these **rulers** report directly to the Devil so that they can receive tasks and delegate them to the 3rd Class Fallen Angels, known as **authorities**. That's the hierarchy of beings discussed in Eph 6:11-12 and who are our enemies.

Next Paul describes a fourth enemy, **against the cosmic powers of this darkness**. The word **cosmic powers** is used only here in the NT (*kosmokrator*). I translate it **cosmic powers** rather than **world forces**. This is a word that further describes the three classes of fallen angels just mentioned. What Paul is doing is describing the comprehensiveness of their plans and therefore their terrifying power and influence. They are not just centered on one locality but are all over the cosmos. This battle is a serious situation indeed. The **cosmic powers** are **of this darkness** which means their nature is one of **darkness**. God is always described as the God of light (1 John 1:5) and believers are called sons of the light (1 Thess 5:3). It makes sense that our enemies would be of opposite nature. Our enemies dwell in darkness on a cosmic scale and are the absolute enemies of the God of light and His sons of light. Next Paul describes the types of beings these are and their location.

against the spiritual beings of evil in the heavenlies. These beings, first of all, are **spirit beings**. They are not of flesh and blood like men but are supernatural beings **of evil**. **evil** could be translated **wickedness**. These supernatural beings are **wicked** at the very core of their being. It is their very nature to do **evil**. Because they hate the God of light they hate the sons of the light. Because they hate Christ they hate those identified with Christ. The location of these supernatural beings of wickedness is **in the heavenlies**. We've looked at the phrase **in the heavenlies**. This phrase refers to the 3rd heaven in scripture. The 1st heaven contains the clouds and atmosphere, where the birds fly, etc... The 2nd heaven refers to outer space, where the planets and galaxies are. The 3rd heaven is the place referred to by the Hebrew *shamayim shamayim*, the highest heaven. It is the location where the fallen angels conversed with God about Job. It is therefore the location of God's throne. It is also the place where Paul was caught up to in 2 Cor 12:2. It is the location of the Father's house and the heavenly destination of Church saints at the pre-Trib Rapture. The 3rd heaven is clearly the present abode of the Fallen Angels and it will remain their abode until the middle of the tribulation when they will be cast out of the 3rd heaven and down to earth (Rev 12:9-10) where their wrath will be poured out against Israel because the Messiah was born of Israel (Rev 12:12, 13, 17).

Location of the Battle. The question that still remains is “where is our battle with the fallen angels being fought”? Is it being fought in heaven or on earth? The answer to this question is complex. First, we must realize that Christians are presently both in heaven and on the earth. Positionally we are in heaven. We have died with Christ, been buried with Christ, been raised with Christ, ascended with Christ and we sit with Christ in the heavenlies (Rom 6; Eph 2:4ff). However, experientially we are still on the earth. Therefore, we are presently both in heaven and on earth. Second, we must realize that Satan and his followers are also presently in heaven and on earth. Obviously from this verse we see that they are **in the heavenlies** but we also know from 1 Pt 5:8 that the devil prowls around like a roaring lion seeking someone to devour and that he is called the god of this age (2 Cor 4:4). Therefore, we can safely conclude that the conflict is presently raging in both the heavenly and earthly realms. “The present battle, then, is played out in the heavenlies and on earth between those who align themselves with the devil and his angelic leaders and those who align themselves with Christ and his angels.” Although Christ has won the decisive military victory on the cross, the reality of conflict continues for believers. “The fact that Paul instructs believers to put on the armor of God argues for the present reality of the struggle.” Therefore, positionally believers have won the victory in Christ (we are overcomers), yet at the same time we will not experientially realize the full victory until all evil is put down. This will occur at the Battle of Armageddon and last for 1,000 years and then at the conclusion of the 1,000 years a final uprising and defeat that will last for all eternity.

Believers are therefore victorious positionally and in a stance of readiness experientially. Because of the nature of our enemies Paul practically re-states v. 11.

Greek Text 6:13 *dia. tou/to avnala,bete th.n panopli,an tou/ qeou/(i|na dunhgh/te avntisth/nai evn th/| h`me,ra/ th/| ponhra/| kai. a[panta katergasa,menoi sth/nai*

Translation 6:13 **For this reason, take up all the armor of God, in order that you (all) may be able to stand in the day of evil and having done everything, to stand.**

So far believers have been commanded to 1) operate in the strength of the Lord not in their own strength, 2) to put on the full armor of God, and 3) to stand against the strategies of the devil. Now, Paul commands us to take up the full armor of God and remain in a perpetual state of readiness so that we can stand whenever attacked. It will do not good to take up the armor once the attack has already begun. We must be in a perpetual state of readiness. One of the most common occurrences pastors and teachers face is the Christian who is standing in the midst of attack and needs help. He has not prepared. Now he is under attack and cannot even find the armor of God. It is too late for a pastor or teacher to help. Pastors and teachers have battles of their own for which they must be constantly prepared.

Christians are far too lax in this respect. They think the troubles and attacks will never come. They are wrong. They come at moments when they least suspect them. Most Christians are quite easy to topple because they are not in a state of continual readiness with full armor already on.

The words **take up** are an aorist active imperative. The aorist tense denotes urgency. If the enemies plan and warriors encompass the entire cosmos then there is a great sense of urgency for the Christian to **take up the full armor of God**. The active voice indicates that believers are responsible for **taking up the full armor of God**. You can't rely on anyone else to do it for you. Finally, it is an imperative or command. Not to **take up the full armor of God** is to reject a military command. Since we are Christians it is sin against our Commander in Chief. This **armor** is God's armor. It is therefore specially designed to protect believers against all the strategies of the devil. Why?

in order that you (all) may be able to stand in the day of evil. The words **be able** mean **in order that you may have the power to stand in the day of evil**. The armor comes from God and the strength **to stand** comes from the Lord. The words **to stand** show, once more, that this is not an offensive but a defensive military operation. We are not to attack the devil and his followers but to make a stand against and hold Christ's territory.

When will the attacks come? Paul says, **in the days of evil**. This refers to the present age which is characterized by evil as well as specific times in your life when you are under intense attack from diabolical powers. Satan may come and tempt you and then leave for awhile until a more opportune time arises. This is exactly what the devil did to Jesus (Luke 4:13). So, we must be perpetually prepared with the full armor of God already on because the age is characterized by evil and the devil is prowling about looking for an opportune time to destroy you.

and having done everything, to stand. After you have done everything refers to having put on the full armor of God. You must be fully prepared ahead of the attack. This posture of **standing** is not about victory or defeat. The victory has already been won by Christ. This is about holding the territory conquered by Christ.

Believers must realize that the devil and his angels are strong but not omnipotent. Therefore, we need the strength of the Lord gained by putting on the full armor of God in order to stand against the powers of the wicked. We cannot stand in our own strength. Dr. L.S. Chafer once said,

In this connection, is interesting to observe that as pilgrims we *walk*, as witnesses we *go*, as contenders we *run*, and as fighters we *stand*.”

Next week we will begin looking at this armor of God and the picture of the divine warrior.

ⁱ Barnhouse, Donald Grey, *The Invisible War* (Grand Rapids, Zondervan, 1965), 156, quoted by R. B. Thieme *Satan and Demonism*, 5.

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