



Ministry of the Word

Sunday 03rd December 2017

by Vincent Gannon

Scripture: Daniel 10:12-21

Subject: Chapter 10, Part 32: Spiritual Warfare – The Unseen War

Oxygen is essential to life as prayer is to your spiritual wellbeing. We are assured in the 12th verse of the text that our God is not only a prayer hearing but a prayer answering God. The unnamed man confirmed to Daniel that from the first day he had set his heart to understand and to humble himself before God, his words were only heard but the answer was dispatched. The emphasises of the importance of prayer and fasting in the right motive, both personally and corporately can never be overstated or underrated. Daniel's prayer was intercessional for God to keep and fulfil His Word to a nation He had chosen. It tells us that the answer was dispatch straight away from heaven and yet Daniel was praying and fasting for 21 days. But Daniel was told the reason for the delay, it was not due to Daniel type of prayer or even his measure of faith, it wasn't because Daniel wasn't listening properly for the answer, no the reason given was that was major spiritual warfare happening with the Prince of Persia. I wonder though, what would, or might have happened if Daniel had cut short his prayer and fasting time? Would have the angel been as delayed for the same amount of time Daniel was praying or more? I find it absolutely amazing that a believer can anywhere, at any time pray and God not only hears but answers. Would this not encourage you more to pray and seek God, would this not encourage you to attend the prayer meeting for Jesus himself said

“Where two or three are gathered in my name there I am in the midst of them” – Matthew 18:20. Do you not want to find yourself in the mist of Jesus, I know I do!

In verse 13, this verse begins with the statement

“But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me twenty-one days; and behold, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, for I had been left alone there with the kings of Persia.”

Now, what do you make of this? The actual human prince of the Kingdom of Persia was not the one who the man was speaking of, we know this because he says that Michael, one of the chief princes had to come and help him. From Scripture, we are told that Michael is an archangel who fights on behalf of Israel. We are also told in Jude that he fought with the devil over Moses’s body and in Revelation 12 verse 7 we are also told that in heaven there was a war were Michael and his angels waged war with the dragon and the dragon and his angels waged war but they were not strong enough. You see there are unseen battles that take place. Revelation 19:14 tells us about the second last battle when men come out to fight against God who are propelled by the hosts of Darkness, but they do so to their defeat. There is much to learn about spiritual warfare and here in this verse is a prime example where we see that the prince of the Kingdom of Persia here is the supernatural spirit/power that is behind the throne. We read of similar accounts throughout scripture for example, in Ezekiel 29:11-19. Remember in chapter 7 Daniel got the vision of the 4 beasts. They were described literally about the demonic forces that dominated the countries. Persia was seen as the “Ram” a horned entity, as indeed the others were horned entities. The “ram” was actually the emblem of that nation then, and it was the symbol of the god they worshiped, yes this was the power behind that throne.

Interestingly enough it is in the Old Testament, that we have incredible reference, with historical back up, regarding the power and destruction created by Satan and his lost angels. Yes, he is a defected foe, but that does not prevent him from doing what is in his nature which is to kill, to destroy and drag everyone down to populate hell. The account in Genesis 3 of the Devil deceiving Eve and Adam shows us the start of the war he raged again mankind, the very crown of God’s creation. With spiritual death came destruction in life. Look at the mayhem in Genesis 6. If the world came close to the very end, it was right there. Thank God, that when he looked out at the earth he found one righteous man Noah. Now this didn’t

mean that Noah was sinless, but it did mean that Noah hasn't compromised, spiritual nor genetically. Let's just quickly turn to Genesis 6:1-6, it's vital to understand this especially as we are in the last days.

“And it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them, That the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose. And the Lord said, My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh: yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years. There were giants in the earth in those days; and also after that, when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bear children to them, the same became mighty men which were of old, men of renown. And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart.”

Genesis 6 plainly shows that the fallen angels mingled with men and the daughters of men in those days, they not only fathered children but history tells us that they taught their children in their ways, like most fathers do and their ways were rebellion and corruption.

Jude also tells us in verse 6 that the very

“angels who did not keep their proper domain, but left their abode, He has reserved in everlasting chains under darkness for the judgement of the great day.”

Why is it important for us to grasp what is really going on here, especially as we are in the last days, remember what Jesus told his disciples in Matthew 24:39,

“But as in the days of Noah, so also shall the coming of the Son of man be.”

This is mind blowing when you actually think about it, fallen angels mingled with humans and all that came with it, surely the days to come will be horrific, in fact in Luke 21:26 tells us:

“Men's hearts will fail them for fear and for looking upon those things which are coming on the earth; for the powers of heaven shall be shaken.”

The flood didn't only come just because of dreadful sin, if that were the case then Jesus surely would have returned by now. It was because of what was taking place, these demonic beings were not just turning the hearts of mankind, but they corrupted nature as God intended (because they themselves cannot create as they are created beings) and they were trying to

thwart God's Salvation rescue plan for mankind that he had promised in Genesis 3:15. A lot had happened in three chapters don't you think!

Another insight into the destruction that is caused by sin and the hidden forces that corrupt mankind in defiance of God is found Genesis 10. A man named Nimrod (1 Chronicles 1:10), the first world dictator brought these back the old practices into his kingdom. Here we have the blue print as it were for evil to take hold through a man. The kings of Israel who should have known better, faired by far the worst. Jehokim was a possessed man, no doubts about it, his darken "spirit", griped the nation and even future generations. This is serious stuff indeed. Not only was the world affected spiritually but especially Israel. Just look at the book of 2 kings to see the inconceivable pagan practices, taught by the evil ones, that Israel took up and worshipped themselves. Imagine, they were practicing a fraction of what had taken place back in Genesis 6, how frightful and stomach turning it is, to us never even mind to Holy God. Because of this, we can see the decline of the nation and the wrath of God poured out, which even lead to Daniel capture. Every conceivable tactic was used to destroy the promises of God for his people and for the mankind. Despite the often-growing darkness in that nation, there was a continual prophetic light, God is continually gracious, merciful, long-suffering and abundant in perfect love.

We can plainly see the powers behind the world stage but how about behind our own curtains. Let us look at the unseen war that occurs in our lives daily. The unnamed man that spoke to Daniel was describing to him indeed spiritual warfare, the Unseen War which affected him not just the nations, for it delayed the answer God had dispatched 21 days earlier. This is a war that still continues to rage and will do until the final battle where Jesus wins! See the last page in Revelation!!

Ephesians 6 is probably the most common place to begin, but it is not the only place to understand spiritual warfare. Ephesians tells us very plainly that we are in battle, who our enemy is and what we have been given to protect us. In fact, so are the unsaved in a spiritual war but they don't know it. Ephesians 2:2 -

"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,"

But it is to the believers that the clarion call is made: Ephesian 6:10

“Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of his might”

Daniel was just strong, wasn't he? Look back on his life to see this, he stood up to Kings as well as Lions! You see, fear immobilises its victim. Remember the outcome of the battle rests on God's performance not on your skill or strength.

“For I have not given you a spirit of Fear, but of love, power and a sound mind” (2 Timothy 1:6)

Having strength in the Lord and the power of his might is the first thing we are instructed to do, even before putting on the armour. We are called to have courage. William Gurnall in his book “The Christian in complete armour, Volume 1” noted on Page 24 the following,

“A cowardly spirit is beneath the lowest duty of a Christian.”

Jesus is the Captain of our salvation (Hebrews 2:10). You need not just courage but also determination if you hope to obey your heavenly Captain's orders. We need courage and determination to stand in battle firmly and to be effective Christ Centre God honouring Christians. Remember, prayer is the main line that leads straight to the throne of God and without prayer and knowing God as Captain, you can become unnerved by attacks. To have victory and conquer you **must** have courage.

The sources of the Christian's courage are an established knowledge of God's truth and a heart set in the right direction (following Christ is primarily a heart matter therefore the heart must be fixed on its purpose and that means that your heart must be set on God's favour not mans.) In Revelation 12:11 it tells us:

“And they have overcome (conquered) him by means of the blood of the Lamb and by the utterance of their testimony, for they did not love and cling to life even when faced with death [holding their lives cheap till they had to die for their witnessing].”

You must petition God for this Holy determination and bravery to follow Christ for your commission is divine. As part of the Christians call to service, you are to not only to renounce sins so as to not let the devil a foot in the door of your lives but you must conform your life to Christ, sidestep stumbling blocks, trust God in every circumstance even when God seems to withdraw, and stay on course to the end of your life. This is why we are continually told to be strong in the Lord for without God we can do nothing (John 15:5). You have everything you need for life and for the unseen war in God (2 Corinthians 3:5). As saints of God, we have a reservoir of graces which is a study in and of itself. Anyway, Without God,

you have no strength, and let this be a solemn warning. Remain humble even when God is blessing and using you. God's favour is neither the work of your own hand nor the price of your own worth. God is the source and sustainer of man and He continually preserves, empowers and works in the Christian's life, keeping us from certain ruin. We need to always rely on God's strength because this plan results in the greatest advancement of God's own glory (Ephesians 1:4,12).

So how does the believer tap into God's source of power?

First, they must have firm persuasion that the Lord is almighty in power and secondly, believe this power is promised for their defence. We must meet every temptation and trial leaning on His arm. God expects us to! We have many reasons for trusting in God's power, for example His past record, your present dilemma (don't panic, pray out to God, remember doubt can cripple, don't give up in despair, He will come to your rescue) and another reason is that His eternal desire is that we are to trust only Him. We, as his children, have fivefold bonds securing God's Power in our lives, which are – His near Kinship to us, His dear love for us, His everlasting covenant, His self-imposed obligation (All his promises are Yea and Amen) and His Interceding Son. His almighty power is your sure friend and we don't have to worry about how to fight when we are found in Him because no assault is strong enough to overpower Him and the supply we have is overflowing. That sound's great, but how about the circumstances that test us to the limits, especially when we are weighted down by sin, overpowered by temptation and oppressed? And how about when God's power is sometimes hidden? Maybe you have overlooked God's power or maybe God has purposely delayed his power but also the cause of the hindrances of the blessings you are seeking may be in yourself, your heart is not set in the right direction or even still maybe God has call you to persevere in the face of overwhelming odds. Hence our need to run after him, seeking him, like Daniel, for understanding. Whatever the circumstance in our lives, nonetheless, we are called to be armed at all times, not just when we are battling it out.

God has Provided the Armour for his saints, even Christ himself – Romans 13:14 tells us:

“But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts.”

Ephesians 6 tells us God has given us the girdle of truth, the breastplate of righteousness, helmet of salvation, sword of the spirit, the footwear of preparation of the gospel of peace and our heavy artillery is prayer! The whole of the saint has to be fully covered by God's design and each piece has a special function which is perfect and complete. Not only is God sole designer of His saint's armour but he also trains them in its proper use, and you can't get a better teacher than God!

The Armour God has the power to protect you, but you must put it on. This is your obligation. You must also keep it on until you've finished your course (Acts 24:16, Luke 12:35, 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18, Ephesians 6:16,17), all because Satan's actions demand it! This armour has its proper place. It should be visible to everyone you meet. It is vital to exercise godly character, so as not to be caught sleeping. God desires the best service you can give Him in your generation. The eye of providence is never shut (Psalm 34:15), God knows where we are at spiritually as well as our weaknesses and is every ready to help.

So why must the Christian be armed at all times?

There is danger if we are unarmed because Satan is our main enemy and he has his methods, extraordinary skill, sharp wit, wiles and subtlety, strategy and framework for argument and is watching on. You see, when you enter into battle, knowing your opponent is vital for survival. We may have lost knowledge but he has gained it by experience and he's increased his craft. Satan as a tempter to sin is a master manipulator, he chooses when to tempt and how to tempt. He chooses also what or whom to use as instruments of temptation. One of Satan's strategies is that he is the accuser of sin. He can accuse the saints of his own wicked thought, he can exaggerate the saint's sin and he appoints himself judge and jury to try the saints, constant nit-picking makes many poor souls weary, depriving them of their joy. Satan tries to rob the saints of their covenant promises.

So, what should the saint's proper reaction to Satan's accusations be? Let his accusation make you more careful, challenge the things you have already studied and read God's word faithfully, let them show you the fallacy of His Logic. Remember our sins are paid in full and nothing can separate you from the love of God (Romans 8), also no weapon formed against you will stand (Isaiah 54:17).

What is God's perfect response to Satan's Accusation? We are not left on our own, Amen! God uses Satan's own schemes to make His saints wise and thankful. Satan plots to

undermine your comfort daily. It is not the grace of God in you but the favour of God as a shield about you that defends you from the wicked one. What more do you need to hear to make your hearts rise in gratitude. Also, God uses the Devil's wiles to make His saints cautious. You are not dealing with a fool hence the need to be every ready.

I'm going to give you 5 Parts of the believers' fortification:

1 - Be aware of Satan as a seducer. Satan cannot create so he has to use the 'Christian's own wood' to create the 'hatchet', as William Gurnall put it. In other words, he uses your Achilles' heel, the fossil of your old nature. Therefore, don't look at his enticements, be aware, call quickly to God for help and the sooner you yield to the Spirit, the less damage is done to your soul.

2 - Cling to God's promise of Justification. This is why it's so important to study the truths of God's word in all aspects!

3 – Avoid entrapment. Don't be lead into doctrinal entrapments, for example, free will verses predestination. Don't reason with Satan. Keep to the plains of scripture to nourish your faith and cheer your spirit. Behind the struggle of ever affliction is a blessing waiting to be born.

4 – Maintain assurance of Salvation. Salvation is the helmet of the armour. Preserve the hope that it brings as this will quench your soul. If you have unbelief, then the remedy is to repent as if you never did; put on fresh acts of faith; appeal to God; praise the name of God and His absolute promises; talk to a Godly friend.

5 – Don't keep the Devil's secrets – Speak to fellow believers, seek Godly counsel. Often times this is when guilt can brew and when people start losing touch with fellow believers and stop praying, the exact opposite of what God wants us to do.

Certain Victory!

We have assurance of victory if armed, Paul assures us in Ephesians 6:11 of this – ***“That ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil”*** – You see, victory, vigorous resistance!

We know that God is victorious, and we must always keep this at the forth front of our hearts and minds. Satan is sentenced already to damnation and he wants to take as many people with him and make a believer limp. But God has placed limits upon Satan and he can't attempt temptation unless God allows it, Matthew 4:1, 2 Corinthians 12:7, 1 Corinthians 1:25. God is wiser and Satan is an unworthy opponent of God Almighty. Remember Joseph in Genesis ***“What they meant as evil, God used it to do good”***. Satan intents to defile the Saint's

conscience but God uses temptation as a purging against future sin and promotes the whole work of grace. Satan intends to defile other saints but God uses Satan's attacks as training grounds so your sin or experience, if dealt with properly, shouldn't bring other Christians down but should help them. Satan intends also to defile the believer's relationship with God. He hates your relationship with God and other saints and he seeks to divide. But where can you go for cleansing, only to God. God uses it to remind us to run to him for shelter and 1 Peter 1:7 tell us that *"times of testing expose the heart's true condition."* Remember the duel is really not between church and Satan but between God and Satan.

Another consideration we have when looking at spiritual warfare is the nature of war and the character of the enemy. Ephesians 6:12 gives us the nature of the war. Don't underestimate the fierceness of the struggle or the strength of our foe, Paul didn't. But the weakness of God is still stronger than all the powers of hell.

The call to Wrestle

We are called to wrestle, so why must Saints wrestle? – Remember those verses "we wrestle not against flesh and blood"?

The sport of wrestling is a one-on-one combat sport and generally not a team game. In wrestling each contestant is the sole object of his challenger's fury. Satan despises particularly every single child of God. He wants you on your own because when he comes close he can take hold of your flesh and corrupt nature and by these things he can shake you. This is why it's so important to draw close to God and be in fellowship with the family of God. God delights to have private time with you. The university of Combat is something that every saint joins when they become a believer and its course is a life time. We wrestle against the devil, his comrades, the old nature, with the body of sin and of flesh. We must wrestle because refusal to wrestle against Satan is passive resistance against God just as must as wrestling against Satan is wrestling for God. You see, we should not wrestle against God's Spirit (Acts 7:51), or His providence (Job:40) (you know questioning God's acts and grumbling against Him), also we should not under any terms wrestle by our own rules, this is disaster. How we should wrestle? We need to enlist God, yes, engage God by prayer to stand behind, in front and all around us. Always stay in training, for if you are not in battle, you should be getting ready and prepared, growing stronger for the next one because there will be a next time, no maybe, it's guaranteed. Also, you should use your advantage wisely. Your advantage is the armour God designed for us and God himself!

Maybe you are discouraged struggling against the enemy, within and without, but you are called to be a wrestler, not a moaner. Remember what Paul said in Romans 8:37-39

“Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

Grace begins at the commencement of your war against sin, not at the end. If you are wrestling, take comfort that you are indeed wrestling and not being passive. Here on earth we overcome to fight again but the prize is worth fighting for and it is in Heaven.

The Character of The Enemy –

The saint has a minor and a major assailant.

The **minor** is flesh and blood, our inner corruption, propagated to us by natural generation. Satan is the flesh’s ally and launches massive attacks while general marshalling your sinful inclinations. If sin is the engine then Satan is the engineer. While humans are flesh and blood, remember that we are not wrestle as such against other humans (Luke 24:29) but we are in combat with the principalities and powers in the unseen world of spirits, behind these people. We are told that we shouldn’t fear flesh and blood but you can’t ignore it, can you? We as Christians must wrestle with two sorts of people, good and bad. Satan can use both!

The good people that I’m thinking of is saints! Surprised? Yes, saint and saint can be in conflict. There are biblical examples of this: between Abraham and Lot; Moses, Aaron and Miriam and even amongst the Apostles even Peter tried to discourage Jesus from His mission. Yes, it happened then as is still does now, that saints can fall out with other saints. Like in civil wars, Satan is the great unseen instigator and we should not give place to the devil, Ephesians 3:27. The scriptures encourage us not to fall out amongst ourselves unless we long for the devil’s company! The devil is a soldier of fortune and runs to any place where there is hope of war for he is attracted to the heat of our anger. He doesn’t work very well without the fire, so he himself is a flame, fanning the embers of contention. Often, we are prone to mistake our heat for zeal, whereas usually the strife between saints is a fire-ship sent by Satan to scatter our unity and order. United we are a strong armada, Satan knows this and has no other way but to encourage strife to sink us. So, what foolishness if it is for us to bite and devour one another, making sport for the devil. Hence, we must be on guard at all times of our own hearts.

Remember *“The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?”* Jeremiah 17:9. So, you can’t just say, well I only done what I felt what was right in my heart. God calls us to examine our motives, our heart and his word to ensure that it’s all inline.

The second man we content with is bad. Satan prods evil men to challenge the saint. Satan is their commander-in-chief, they follow him obediently unawares mostly and they have no choice, they are slaves to him. When they reproach you or even persecute you, look beyond them and spend your anger on Satan. Don’t fear their power or admire their talents, they are emissaries of Satan.

The saint’s chief assailants are evil spirits. Paul tells us this in Ephesians 6, when he told us that we do not fight against flesh and blood but against principalities and powers. These evil spirits are directed by Satan himself, as he sends them out to war against the saints. Ephesians gives us the scope of their influences as they have been endlessly working tirelessly to establish their own dominion on earth since they were thrown out of heaven. The influences are as follows:

- Their systems of government
- The magnitude of their power
- Their territory
- Their inherent nature
- The subject of their dispute with God

In Daniel, we can see that the prince of Persia was at war and soon the prince of Greece was going to battle with the angels. As princes appoint ministers so does Satan send his special emissaries to carry out his plans. These plans can be to affect the world globally, nationally (like Persia and Greece in Daniel), locally, community (like Churches) or personally.

This is why we must continually put on the full armour of God.

Girdle of truth – Why is truth the belt. A ordinary belt keeps our clothes in place. The spiritual belt of truth holds everything together.

The breastplate of righteous – The Breastplate protects the vital organs, such as the heart.

The Helmet of Salvation – The greatest battle is for the mind. This helmet protects us not just ensuring us of where we will be eternally but also the promises that we have as children of God.

Sword of the spirit – The Word of God is for our correction, discipline, growth and protection against the wiles of the accusations of the Devil.

The footwear of preparation of the gospel of peace – We need to ready at all times, not to be afraid, we need to be ready to go whenever and where-ever God calls us. This is far from what Satan wants you to do, spread the good news.

The heavy artillery, prayer – Intercession, Like Daniel who prayed for 21 days. Surely this should encourage us to keep praying, the answer is on the way!!

With Battle frequently comes casualties. We often need to inspect and repair our lives and our attitudes, take stock of our graces and ensure we are going strong. Battle is certain and its necessary to keep the armour to withstand the day of evil. For a happy outcome of war, it is necessary that we persevere. The bible talks quite a bit about perseverance in the battle, or in the race – James 1 and the book of Philippians.

God supplies armour sufficient for the battle, but we must put it on. There is safety in resisting the devil, for the bible tells us that he will flee because the enemy of our souls can be defeated. Satan is a cowardly enemy, an encroaching enemy and an accusing enemy.

Therefore, we must stand, in our own place not commandeering another's. There are some considerations as to why it's important to stand, which are –

- When you leave your God given appointed place to stand to work outside your calling, you lose God's approval
- When you ignore His restrictions as to place and calling, you lose God's protection
- God holds you accountable only for your work, not another's work
- You will suffer unnecessarily when you bear burdens that God never intended you to carry
- A flighty spirit usually carries people out of their place and calling.

Therefore stand – don't flee and don't fall asleep. You must remain wakeful for the battle that you are in. The saint's work is too important and demanding to be done if it's done half-heartedly or half asleep. Keeping watch reaps advantages for the Christian as they are always ready. So, watch constantly, watch universally and most importantly watch wisely.

Amen.