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WHY TAKE ON THE WHOLE ARMOUR OF GOD?

A STUDY OF THE BOOK OF EPHESIANS
NUMBER 72
EPHESIANS 6:13

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EPHESIANS 6:13 "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."

God allows Satan to attack his plan and allows Satan to put certain pressures on believers in order to discipline them and to prove to them that his divine grace can be manifest. This is one of the principles on which the Angelic Conflict is built.

Cheap Modern Substitutes

In the Church Age of our day many have fallen into a rut and are trying to survive on a program, on doing great things for God, on rituals of worship routine rather than the fundamentals of doctrine. Substituting "doing things" for an understanding of the Word of God is the greatest curse of the modern church of our time. Many pastors and church leaders are aware of this trend, but do not have the courage to stop it. Many are afraid to buck this tiger, but here in this church we are trying to buck that tiger and we are trying to swing our program around doctrine and around learning the Word of God.

Now this is in keeping with the Angelic Conflict and in our last study we gave a number of points on the Angelic Conflict. Now we come to point nine and it is this pastor's prayer that each of us will have the good sense to put on the whole armour of God.

9. ANGELIC OBSERVATION

Angels are observing all believers today in the Church Age. Not only do you have a testimony before the whole world of humanity but you are also under angelic observation. In keeping with this, we have studied the two lobes of the mind, the left lobe which is the perceptive lobe, and the right lobe which is the lobe of the norms and standards. Medical science is just now getting around to this and a number of brain surgeons are aware of the response of the brain in this fashion. The Bible teaches that you can wipe out the right lobe of your mind through mental attitude sins. Also drugs or alcohol or fornication can wipe out the norms and standards of the right lobe of your mind. Now this is a part of the Angelic Conflict in your life, and God has made provision for you so you can have adequate resources to meet all the pressures of the Christian life. A deposit of doctrine in the mind is necessary if we are to have enough stability to give us the capacity to love God.

Now each one of us is definitely in the army of God and we are fighting an unseen enemy. In order to wage this fight, we must have the proper equipment. We need to know that angels observe us during the Church Age. Remember that angels observed the Lord Jesus Christ just prior to the Church Age.

1 TIMOTHY 3:16 "And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory."

We are told that elect angels rejoice over the conversions of sinners.

LUKE 15:7-10 "I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance. Either what woman having ten pieces of silver, if she lose one piece, doth not light a candle, and sweep the house, and seek diligently till she find it? And when she hath found it, she calleth her friends and her neighbours together, saying, Rejoice with me, for I have found the piece which I had lost. Likewise, I say unto you there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth."

Let us also remember that fallen angels are organized under Satan's command to resist and oppose believers.

EPHESIANS 6:12 "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."

JOB 1:6 "Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan came also among them."

JOB 2:1-3 "Again there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan came also among them to present himself before the Lord. And the Lord said unto Satan, From whence comest thou? And Satan answered the Lord, and said, From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it. And the Lord said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil? and still he holdeth fast his integrity, although thou movedst me against him, to destroy him without cause."

We have many passages that tells us that angels observe believers during the Church Age.

1 CORINTHIANS 4:9 "For I think that God hath set forth us the apostles last, as it were appointed to death: for we are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men."

1 CORINTHIANS 6:3 "Know ye not that we shall judge angels? how much more things that pertain to this life?"

1 CORINTHIANS 11:10 "For this cause ought the woman to have power on her head because of the angels."

EPHESIANS 3:10 "To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God,"

1 TIMOTHY 5:21 "I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels, that thou observe these things without preferring one before another, doing nothing by partiality."

1 PETER 1:12 "Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into."

Not only do we have angelic observation but we have angelic participation in this struggle. This is just another reason why the emphasis of the Christian life should be on learning and knowing doctrine, not just on doing something. Witnessing and praying and giving are all legitimate and bona fide functions of the Christian life. Many other activities are commanded also. God knew our weaknesses and in order to fortify us in all these things he has placed major emphasis on knowing doctrine. This is the equipment that makes witnessing effective and it makes prayer effective and it makes giving meaningful.

10. THE IMPACT OF THE FALL OF MAN

Through the fall of man, Satan gained control of the world, not necessarily the control of mankind. This is why God put into mankind the same thing he put in angelic creatures, namely, free will. This makes man a free agent in the Devil's world. When unbelievers choose Satan's plan, then they become a part of Satan's machinery. The first way you can choose God's plan is belief in Christ at the cross. Salvation through faith in Christ frees man from satanic control and domination. After salvation the great thrust is the knowledge of doctrine. The more doctrine one has in his norm and standard lobe, the better equipped he is for the daily struggle. This is the only way for a man to operate independently of Satan's plan for the world. The fact that Satan is the ruler of this world is taught in these passages

2 CORINTHIANS 4:4 "In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them."

JOHN 12:31 "Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out."

JOHN 14:30 "Hereafter I will not talk much with you: for the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me."

JOHN 16:11 "Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged."

Therefore, one of the greatest issues in the Christian life is divine guidance. Many Christians want a very simple system in dealing with God and they want a green light for go and a red light for stop. But it is much more complex than that and the only basis for knowing the will of God for any phase of life is Bible doctrine stored up in the right lobe of the mind. Doctrine in the left lobe, in the perceptive lobe of your mind is good, and must always start there. But this doctrine must be transferred over into the right lobe and stored there on the launching pad ready for action. This procedure can be greatly hindered by negative volition toward doctrine and it can be cut off with a short circuit which comes from mental attitude sins. Negative volition toward doctrine and mental attitude sins are the two greatest enemies of the Christian life.

11. QUESTIONS THAT ARE ANSWERED BY THE ANGELIC CONFLICT.a. Why are we here?

Inside of man is volition, the free will of the soul. When this is linked to the cross in faith, it becomes a point in resolving the angelic conflict. God had made provision for man's salvation without compromising one single phase of his essence or his character. Through propitiation God's perfect righteousness is maintained. Christ became sin for us on the cross and therefore, God's perfect righteousness was maintained. Neither is the justice of God compromised, for Christ became our substitute. All of our sins were poured out on Christ at the cross. Everything about the cross is grace. God is perfect and his plan is perfect and it is all built on the principle of grace. Grace depends on the perfect character of God. Man has nothing that impresses God, and as man comes to the cross, he comes totally depraved. Even man's good deeds are filthy rags in God's sight. All depends on who and what God is and who and what Christ is. The Holy Spirit moves in and makes this plain to man. Merit in salvation always flows to the object in salvation which is Christ, and never to the subject, which is man. Thus in salvation, the character of God is intact and is in no way changed. Man exists to resolve the angelic conflict and is always free to go negative or positive. God always keeps his character intact and punishes the unbeliever by placing him in the lake of fire. This is the only way God's character can maintain perfection.

All members of the human race are born spiritually dead and they all approach the cross with exactly the same need. Those who accept are saved and those who reject are lost. But Colossians 2:14-15 and Hebrews 2 puts the cross in a new focus and shows how it is related to the Angelic Conflict. If only one person would believe in Christ, the Angelic Conflict would be resolved, but millions have believed and the doom of Satan and fallen angels is certain.

b. The second question--Why Is There Sin In The World?

God proposed the cross and he permitted sin. Sin is contrary to the character of God. Sin didn't originate with God. Man created the old sin nature and thereby, cleared the way for man to sin. The pride of Satan and the pride of woman led the woman to partake of the forbidden fruit and this free will act came into man from Satan himself. He spread this same kind of negative volition through the whole angelic creation. So both in the human race and in the angelic world negative volition is the culprit.

Therefore, the cross is the resolution of this thing called sin. The emphasis of the cross is this--by the cross, sins were judged and Christ became sin for man and therefore, the issue is not sins, but the issue is Christ. What a man actually does is this--he accepts the work of God in his behalf over against his own work. It is impossible to be saved by any human merit of what we are or of what we do--it is totally His work, His provision, His grace, His accomplishment. That's why we must never try to pressure people into being Christians. It can't be done that way.

c. The third question--Why Is There Suffering In The World? Man's negative volition in the Garden of Eden brought the original fall and opened the door for all kinds of suffering to come to the human race. Suffering is allowed so God can demonstrate something to angels. It demonstrates to angels that the plan of God in eternity past is infinitely greater than anything Satan can do in providing for the sufferings of man. Satan just can't cut it and God can and man's sufferings demonstrate this truth every day. Satan would like to be able to provide for all the sufferings of man, but his genius is totally incapable of doing so. Satan tries to eliminate suffering and in doing so only intensifies suffering. For example--socialism is from Satan. Just as religion is from Satan and just like trying to make all people equal is from Satan. These are all plans from the Devil. When you look at these plans superficially, they look glorious and wonderful. The idea of giving food to every hungry person in the world looks so merciful and glorious. The idea of giving a job to every person is indeed an ideal we would all like to reach. So Satan is now trying to do all these things in his world. Satan is trying to be a panacea to all ills, all suffering, but he can't do it. Starving is very embarrassing to Satan, because he is the ruler of this present world. He wants to solve these problems, and every time he seeks to solve these problems created by negative volition toward God, Satan discovers that he isn't God and his actions eventually only intensify suffering. Socialism will eventually lead to more suffering. And Satan's superficial methods to make all people equal only make for more suffering. Our own American public school system is in danger of being destroyed by Satan right on this very principle. It is all done in sincerity. But this is a satanic concept which is Satan's undoing. Satan is not up to handling his own kingdom and therefore, whenever he tries to create a panacea, a solution, it always bursts in his face. We see this principle at work in the decline and fall of our own country every day. You cannot expect Satan to come up with a plan that will make all people equal, for the only plan that will do this is based on the cross and on Christ and on the plan of God. There is no other solution. You can give people equal rights and equal opportunities but only God can reach within the soul and redeem man, and thus in this amazing inner transformation, people are made equal. I doubt if I have ever read a more important paragraph in this dining hall than this paragraph I have just read.

So this is the way suffering is intensified. I was embarrassed recently when Henry Kissinger went to Africa and tried to intimidate Rhodesia and South Africa by throwing the influence of the United States against their policies. Kissinger tried to force these nations to adopt our liberal and socialistic views. Look how phony and hypocritical we really are in some of our foreign policies. There are two main sources of chrome in the world--Rhodesia and the Soviet Union. To try to break the back of Rhodesia, we refused to buy more chrome from them and instead we are buying chrome from the Soviet Union at a higher price than we would have to pay in Africa.

Suffering in the world, in a large measure, is created by Satan in his false attempts to eliminate suffering. Satan would like to set up the millennium before the second advent of Christ if he could. Satan would like to eliminate war if he could. War is rather embarrassing to Satan for this is his world and he is in command and war makes it appear that he isn't doing a very good job of things here. Even though Satan is a genius and the ruler of this world, he doesn't have the ability to stop war.

SUFFERING EXISTS IN THIS WORLD SIMPLY TO THE EXTENT THAT SATAN IS NOT CAPABLE OF COPING WITH THE PROBLEMS OF THE HUMAN RACE. He simply does not have the ability to do so, and as Satan sets up one solution after the other, he always intensifies suffering. It is like putting your finger in the hole in the dike and then it breaks out over at some other place. The Devil has about used up all his fingers and toes trying to stop the overflow and he has just about had it. Suffering is Satan's inability to cope with the situation. And God permits the suffering to go on so he can demonstrate to us that his grace is sufficient. God has demonstrated millions of times that in the midst of suffering his grace and provision is greater than the suffering. God has provided for every disaster, every suffering, and every trial. He has done this through his perfect plan and through Bible doctrine. We have a chance to demonstrate to Satan that in times of suffering God's divine assets are adequate and sufficient at all times.

Here in what we call "time" is God's only opportunity to demonstrate to us that he is adequate to care for our suffering. For the minute we die, we will move into his glorious perfection and through the billions of years of eternity there will be no pain, no suffering, no death and no sorrow. So we are lucky, pardon the expression, to get to suffer so we can display the amazing provision of the grace of God.

EPHESIANS 6:13 "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." "Wherefore" is the preposition "dia" plus the accusative and it should read "Because of this." So this verse says--"Because of the Angelic Conflict, and because we have Satan's organized opposition in this battle we face every day, we need divine equipment, the entire armour of God." "Take" is the aorist, active, imperative of "analamba no" and it means we are to take on this armour again and again and again. This armour is nothing less than the Word of God and we must take it on every single day if we expect to fight the good fight of faith.

We will study the makeup of this armour in our next lesson.