

PRESENT TRUTH

A Teaching Newsletter of Lifestream Teaching Ministries

Wherefore I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye know them, and be established in the present truth. ([2 Peter 1:12 KJV](#))

Volume 3, Issue 10

October 2005

Spiritual War Series The Things Invisible--Part 3

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We began this “Present Truth” series on Spiritual War with the issue on “The Things Invisible—Part 1” and the previous issue “The Things Invisible—Part 2”. Our Scripture text for this series is this:

[Col 1:13-16 NASB](#)

- (13) For He rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son,
- (14) in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.
- (15) He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation.
- (16) For by Him all things were created, *both* in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities--all things have been created through Him and for Him.

It is verse 16 that gives us a glimpse of how things were structured when all things were created. When the Lord created all things, He created all things in heaven and all things in the earth including all things that are visible and that are invisible. The invisible include:

1. thrones,
2. dominions,
3. rulers, and
4. authorities.

This list presents four areas of government structure and realms of responsibility. Our first issue of this series dealt with “thrones” and the last issue examined the “dominions and rulers” levels, this issue moves on to “authorities”.

Authorities

The word translated as authorities is “*exousia*” and is sometimes translated as “power” and sometimes “authority”. Its meaning is “the authority to act”; i.e., the right or privilege to do something. In some cases, it means “jurisdiction”. Putting this together, we can say that “authorities” are the realms of jurisdiction of the Rulers where they have the right to do things.

The same word is used to describe the realm of authority for Satan in Ephesians where it is translated as “power”.

Eph 2:2 NASB

(2) in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience.

So, we can say that the Rulers (KJV=Principalities) have realms of jurisdiction (KJV=powers) that are functional in our visible, earthly realm even though they are located in the heavens and are themselves invisible.

This is made clear by Paul later in his epistle to the Ephesians.

Eph 6:12 NASB

(12) For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual *forces* of wickedness in the heavenly *places*.

Our struggle is not against the visible; i.e., flesh and blood, people; but against the invisible; i.e., rulers and the realms of their jurisdiction, which include the world forces of darkness and spiritual wickedness located in the heavens. (*Places* is italicized in the scripture, meaning that it is not in the original but was added by the translators).

In our last issue of Present Truth, we looked at Daniel 10:12-13, which referred to a couple of the rulers (principalities) that resisted the angel coming with the answer to Daniel's prayer. We concluded four things from this incident:

1. that there are rulers (chiefs, principalities) that are opposed to God's will
2. that these rulers have territories or areas, which they rule
3. that these rulers hinder God's purposes in their territories
4. that Daniel's perseverance in prayer was necessary for him to receive his answers

We now know that this is the created structure of the invisible realm and we live with the invisible functions of the heavenlies on a daily basis.

New Testament Changes

Our look at Daniel was from the Old Testament vantage point. Have things changed in the New Testament? The answer is both yes and no. The created structure of the invisible things have not changed; however, their functions and abilities have been modified. Colossians chapter two gives a number of things that were accomplished for us by the resurrection and ascension of Christ. One of the things mentioned involves the invisible realm and the triumph of Jesus over the rulers and authorities.

Col 2:15 NASB

(15) When He had disarmed the rulers and authorities, He made a public display of them, having triumphed over them through Him.

Notice that the rulers and authorities were *disarmed* not *removed*. Apparently, they still function in their created capacity, just not with their full abilities. What does that mean to us? Let's consider that for a moment.

When God created all of the beings that inhabit the heavens, He created all that were needed to do all that He intended for them to do. Each created being had a specific purpose and function with all of the necessary ability to properly do his work. There was not an excess of creatures, nor was there a lack for the work. In other words, there were not too many nor too few for the jobs that needed doing.

Since angels, apparently, don't marry and reproduce (Matthew 22:30), God created the exact number to fulfill all of the work that was needed. This is important because in Revelation chapter 12 we have the story of the war in the heavens with the result that the Devil and his angels (a third of all of the angels) were cast into the earth. If a third of all of the angels are following Satan, what happened to the original job functions for which they were created? It would follow that those functions were either vacated or else the fallen angels continued in them but with perverted allegiance. It would seem to me that few if any positions were vacated since the work was important enough that a being was designed and created by God to fulfill it.

If this is true, then the Rulers and authorities are functioning without any allegiance to God and are at cross purposes to His plans. Jesus disarmed them to limit their ability to do harm to the purposes of God. However, they are still powerful enough without their weapons that we still need the armor of God to protect ourselves (Ephesians 6:13).

If they are disarmed, what weapons do they have to use against us? Their primary weapon is deception. They deceive men into placing themselves in a place of disobedience, even to becoming fully lawless. They have developed the world systems in such a way that the world provides enticement and deception by empowering our fleshly desires in three areas.

1Jo 2:16 NASB

(16) For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world.

Years ago Pogo said in a comic strip, "We has (sic) met the enemy and he is us." We become our own enemy when we allow our flesh to be enticed by the world. It causes us to come under the authority of the Principalities and Powers. We are *in* the world but not *of* the world.

Joh 17:15-16 NASB

(15) "I do not ask You to take them out of the world, but to keep them from the evil one.

(16) "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

We are set apart from the world by His Word and kept from the evil one by His power. When we yield to the temptation of the world, we place ourselves back under the ruler of this world (John 8:34). We were under this ruler prior to knowing Jesus and were lost to the purposes of God. If we walk in disobedience, we allow the spirit of the prince of the power of the air to work in us again and we become slaves of sin.

Eph 2:1-3 NASB

- (1) And you were dead in your trespasses and sins,
- (2) in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience.
- (3) Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest.

The “course of this world”, “the prince of the power of the air”, and “the lusts of our flesh . . . desires of the flesh and of the mind” are all linked in this set of scriptures. As we walk in the way of the world with a spirit of lawlessness working in us, it gives authority to the enemy in our life. Jesus had nothing in Him that was of the world; therefore, the ruler of the world had no authority over Him.

Joh 14:30 NASB

- (30) "I will not speak much more with you, for the ruler of the world is coming, and he has nothing in Me;

Our Position

We are no longer a part of the world. We belong to the Lord and have become a citizen of His Kingdom. We are ambassadors of His Kingdom while we walk this earth (2 Cor. 5:20) and are not subject to the prince of this world because we are being led by the Spirit of God and function as one of His sons (Rom 8:14). That is why we are to pray for His Kingdom to come and His will to be done.

By deception and trickery the enemy entangles us again in the affairs of the world; thereby, gaining power over us. So we see that our struggle against the rulers and authorities begins with our struggle with the flesh. It was on the cross with Jesus that our flesh died and we became dead to the world.

Gal 6:14 NASB

- (14) But may it never be that I would boast, except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.

This is what empowers us to be free from the world and the ruler of the world—the word of the cross.

1Co 1:18 NASB

- (18) For the word of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.

It does no good to preach the cross to the lost. Its power is not for them. They need the word of atonement—the blood of Jesus. The cross is for those who believe, who are being saved. It is through the cross that we are set free from the desires of the flesh and it is the cross that breaks our ties to the world.

The Church has become weakened and worldly because we have stopped teaching the Word of the Cross. Without its application to our lives, we live under the world system and its ruler. It is

possible to walk as a professed Christian and yet be an enemy of the cross of Christ.

Phi 3:18-20 NASB

(18) For many walk, of whom I often told you, and now tell you even weeping, *that they are enemies of the cross of Christ*,

(19) whose end is destruction, whose god is *their* appetite, and *whose* glory is in their shame, who set their minds on earthly things.

(20) For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ;

If we desire to be overcomers, we must make our death on the cross with Jesus real in our daily lives. That is the only way that we are set free from the control of the rebellious Rulers and authorities. We are dead to the flesh and alive to Christ.

Our Weapons

In our struggle with Rulers and authorities, we have only one offensive weapon—the Sword of the Spirit, the Word of God (Eph. 6:17). This is not the *logos* but the *rhema* word of God—the right word at the right time in the right place. As such, it must be spoken to the heavenlies to be effective. That is one of the reasons that, on an individual basis, we must confess Christ before men (Luke 12:8; Rom. 10:9).

Struggling with Rulers and authorities is also a corporate function that requires the proclamation of the Word of God to the heavenlies. This, in some manner, has a spiritual effect that weakens the ability of the Rulers and authorities to resist the purposes of God. Either that or it empowers the angels of God to enforce His will on the Rulers and authorities. (*For more on this see the teaching lesson: “Proclamations and Prayers”, available on the website.*)

Our enemies are not visible, so our weapons are not visible; but, they are powerful enough to destroy enemy strongholds and fortresses.

2Co 10:3-4 NASB

(3) 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.

The next verse tells us that the invisible battlefield is in the area of our mind.

2Co 10:5 NASB

(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 word for “speculations” also means “reasonings”, “imagination”, “computations” or calculations. All of these are in the mental arena. Our thoughts become our enemies as they are empowered by the worldly processes and must be taken captive and brought into obedience to the Lord Jesus.

Only the Word of God can deal with this because it is the only thing powerful enough to expose, discern, and judge our thought processes. It is the Word that reveals our intentions and judges whether they are of the flesh or of the spirit.

Heb 4:12 NASB

(12) For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

Actually, it is the “things invisible” that impact us more than that which is visible. We must walk by faith with the eyes of the spirit in order to navigate the invisible realm.

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