China has the largest church in the world, with 115 to 120 million true Christians, mostly in house churches.
James Rutz

Prayer Study #468
EPHESIANS 6
First Love Ministries, Inc., of Perry, Georgia USA

Ephesians 6 New King James Version (NKJV)
Children and Parents

6 *Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.* ***2*** *"Honor your father and mother," which is the first commandment with promise:* ***3*** *"that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth."*
4 *And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord.*

According to William Barclay, if the Christian religion did a lot for women, as we discussed last week, it did even more for children. During that time period, fathers had absolute power over their families. They could sell family members as slaves, could force them to work in the fields, and could punish them in any way they chose, even if it meant death. Furthermore, this power over a man's children lasted as long as the father lived, even if the child was grown and in a high government position.

When a child was born, it was placed at the father's feet. If the father stooped and picked up the child, the child was welcomed in the family. If the father turned and walked away, the child was either thrown out like garbage or taken to the Roman forum. There, at night, people would come to take the babies, usually to raise them as slaves or to raise

them as prostitutes.

If a sickly or weak or deformed child was born, they were usually drowned. The Roman civilization in Paul's day had no mercy for imperfectly formed children.

Paul starts out telling children to honor their parents. This means to obey them, respect them, and never cause them any pain. Obedience also involves recognition of the authority of the parent. Honoring one's parents is a command that gives the promise of a peaceful and long life.

Then he addresses the fathers. This 4th verse's theme is repeated in Colossians 3:21: *Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged. To provoke* in this verse means *to cause someone to harbor feelings of resentment.* This does not mean that parents are to be lacks in their discipline and instruction to their children, but they are not to discipline in anger or inconsistency. And the parent is to train and admonish their children in the things of the Lord. *Admonition* means *gentle reproof or counsel and warning against fault or oversight.*

Bondservants and Masters

5 *Bondservants, be obedient to those who are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in sincerity of heart, as to Christ;* ***6*** *not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but as bondservants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart,* ***7*** *with goodwill doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men,* ***8*** *knowing that whatever good anyone does, he will receive the same from the Lord,*

whether he is a slave or free.
9 *And you, masters, do the same things to them, giving up threatening, knowing that your own Master also is in heaven, and there is no partiality with Him.*

Paul wrote and believed that slaves and masters were equal before God. In that day, it was estimated that there were 60 million slaves in Rome. Rome was the ruler of the world, and the citizens had grown lazy in their affluence and power. Even doctors and teachers and secretaries to the Emperors were slaves. These slaves were considered not people but property. They were no better than animals but could talk. They could be killed at the master's whim. If they ran away, they were either killed or branded on their forehead with the letter "F" for fugitive.

Bondservants or bond slaves had absolutely no rights. We have talked about these bond slaves extensively. Paul, Peter, John, Timothy, and others called themselves bond slaves for Christ. They were saying that they completely gave themselves to Jesus and acknowledge that they had absolutely no rights and gave complete obedience to Christ.

Paul is telling these slaves that they are to live the Christian life wherever God has place them. They are to live as Christians even while serving as slaves. The Lord does not always change the circumstances but allows us to overcome in the circumstances.

Then Paul address the Christian masters. They must remember that, although they are in charge, they too are slaves to God and will one day stand before Him and give an account.

The Whole Armor of God

10 *Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might.* ***11*** *Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.* ***12*** *For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.* ***13*** *Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.*

14 *Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness,* ***15*** *and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace;* ***16*** *above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one.* ***17*** *And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God;* ***18*** *praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints—* ***19*** *and for me, that utterance may be given to me, that I may open my mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel,* ***20*** *for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.*

I believe that verses 10 through 20 are some of the most important verses that Paul wrote and are especially very applicable to our day. He starts off with the command: *Be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might.* We are most strong when we are walking in the dunamis power of the Holy Spirit. That is one reason the baptism of the Holy Spirit is so

important in our day, a day of great evil, perhaps the most evil day that has ever been. We must remember that we are in warfare, and it is a great disappointment to me that most of the Church has not been taught or shown any interest in spiritual warfare.

Secondly, Paul's words command us to put on the whole armor of God, so that we may stand against the wiles or tricks of the enemy. This is a spiritual battle and not against flesh and blood, as we so often try to make it.

This description of the hierarchy of the satanic kingdom is one of the clearest teachings on what the enemy is up to in our world. From this and other Biblical teaching, we can see that this demonic kingdom is organized as follows:

SATAN

Commander in chief of evil forces

Satan is neither omnipresent, omniscient, or omnipotent. He does, however, have power which is much greater than human power. We can defeat his power, however, through the Blood and Name of Jesus, through the Word of God, and through *dunamis* or the Holy Spirit's power working through us.

John Torell believes that the most prominent disguise that Satan went by during Paul's day was Zeus. A large temple was built to Zeus in the city of Pergamos in modern Turkey. According to the Bible, this was the place where Satan had placed his seat (Revelation 2:13), much like the Lord dwells in Zion, His earthly dwelling place (Psalm 133:13, Psalm 2:6, Psalm 9:11, Psalm 76:2, Joel 3:17, etc.). According to Torell, "Part of the temple and its entire altar were moved in the 19th century to Germany, and some 50 years later it played a significant role in the Nazi's rise to power. The story gets even stranger when the Soviet military dismantled the altar in Berlin and moved it to Moscow at the end of 1945. (Satan, it is thought, also had his seat in the city of Tyre

at one point. Two hundred years later he had moved his seat to Pergamos where he was worshiped in the temple of Zeus. In the reign of the Antichrist, he will set his seat in the city of Jerusalem [Revelation 11:1-9]).

PRINCIPALITIES

These are very powerful demonic forces usually over large areas of land and sometimes, I believe, over ministry groups. These princes are the strongman over an area and influence religion, lust, suicide, murder, etc. Anywhere there is an obvious spiritual problem, you can be sure there is a strong demonic prince over that area behind the problem. San Francisco, for example, obviously has a principality associated with lust and homosexuality over the city. They are powerful, and yet we, as a corporate body, are to wrestle them to the ground. Gabriel in coming in answer to Daniel's prayer about the last days had to call the archangel Michael to fight the Prince of Persia before he could get through and stated that he would have to deal with the Prince of Grecia on the way back. If the Body of Christ could get a revelation about Principalities, we could change whole areas and bring forth righteousness and peace.

POWERS

Powers are demonic forces right under Principalities in rank and power. They are evil powers over institutions, such as schools, churches, penal systems, etc.

RULERS OF THE DARKNESS OF THIS WORLD

These demonic beings influence literature, rock music, television, liberal and unbiblical sex education teachings in our schools, movies, and slanted news reports, etc.

SPIRITUAL WICKEDNESS IN HIGH PLACES

These demonic spirits have to do with spiritually high places. They are what's behind occult groups, demon worship, cults, false doctrines, Islam, etc.

DEMONS AND EVIL SPIRITS

These are evil spirit beings who are some of Satan's main agents in his warfare against humanity. They are disembodied spirits who

seek to embody human beings. I do not think that I can prove this Biblically, but from my experience, I see demons as being more powerful than spirits, but I am not sure there is a true distinction between the two.

Three times Paul calls for believers to stand against the devil's schemes (verses 11, 13, 14). We can do this only by putting on the armor of God. The armor that the Lord has given us too fight against Satan and the demonic kingdom consists of five defensive pieces and one offensive piece:

Loins Girded about with Truth

This piece of armor is put around your loins or the place between the hips. This is the place of birthing. Truth in scripture is Jesus who is the Word made flesh. Part of the reason in studying the Word is to learn the Truth of God. We want to birth truth, especially as we come to the end of the age and are faced with incredible deception. The belt of truth went around a soldier's middle and held the soldier's sword. This allowed him to move quickly and freely. Christians move freely and quickly because they know the truth.

Breastplate of Righteousness

This piece of armor covers the heart. Many times the heart in scripture is referring to both the spirit and the soul. In this wicked age, we must strive to walk in righteousness. We have an assignment to bring the Kingdom of God to the earth. *The kingdom is not meat or drink, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost* (Romans 14:17). And it is only when we walk in righteousness that all the promises of God, yes and amen!, will be added unto us (Matthew 6:33: *But seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.)*

Feet Shod with the Preparation of the Gospel of Peace

Feet have to do with our walk in the Lord. We should always walk as those in peace, not those in fear. Christians also should

always be ready to walk out their faith by sharing with others who have not heard.

Shield of Faith

One of the most dangerous weapons in ancient warfare was the fiery dart. When a soldier was carrying one of the great oblong shields, he was protected because the fiery dart sank into the wood of the shield. This caused the fiery dart's fire to go out. We know that *without faith it is impossible to please God* (Hebrews 11:6). 1st John 5:4: *For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world; and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.*

Helmet of Salvation

The helmet of salvation covers our minds. That is where the real battle between having the mind of Christ and following the dictates of Satan is fought. We are to take every thought captive (2nd Corinthians 10:5) , and we are to realize what salvation really means. It is not just the new birth. In both the Old and New Covenants the word literally means deliverance, preservation, prosperity, healing, soundness or wholeness, and aid (help and comfort.) Salvation is past, present, and future (*Who delivered us, and doth deliver, in whom we trust that He will deliver us* 2nd Corinthians 1:10). And Who is Salvation? Simeon said this when he saw Jesus, the young child: *"Lord, now You are letting Your servant depart in peace, according to Your word; For my eyes have seen Your salvation which You have prepared before the face of all peoples, a light to bring revelation to the Gentiles and the glory of Your people Israel."*

Sword of the Spirit

The sword is the word of God. Barclay explains it this way: *"The word of God is both our weapon of defense against sin and*

our weapon of attack against the sins of the world. We can never win God's battles without God's book.

Finally, Paul addresses the greatest weapon of all for the Christian. That is prayer. Paul tells us that we are to always pray. (In 1st Thessalonians 5;17 he says, "Pray without ceasing.") He is telling us that we are to pray frequently, regularly, and consistently. We are to pray with intensity. We are to pray for others

Then he asks for prayer for himself. He does not ask for blessings and comfort and peace. He asks that he may be able to proclaim with boldness God's mystery, i.e. that He loves all people and salvation is for anyone who believes.

A Gracious Greeting

21 *But that you also may know my affairs and how I am doing, Tychicus, a beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord, will make all things known to you;* ***22*** *whom I have sent to you for this very purpose, that you may know our affairs, and that he may comfort your hearts.*

23 *Peace to the brethren, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.* ***24*** *Grace be with all those who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. Amen.*

Tychicus took Paul's letter. Unlike most of Paul's letters, there is little personal information about Paul, except that he is prison. He knew that Tychicus would convey how he was doing to the people he loved so much at Ephesus. Then he blesses the hears of the letter with peace and love and grace to all those who sincerely love Jesus Christ.

There Is a Fountain Filled with Blood

Text: William Cowper, 1731-1800

1. There is a fountain filled with blood
drawn from Emmanuel's veins;
and sinners plunged beneath that flood
lose all their guilty stains.
Lose all their guilty stains,
lose all their guilty stains;
and sinners plunged beneath that flood
lose all their guilty stains.

2. The dying thief rejoiced to see
that fountain in his day;
and there may I, though vile as he,
wash all my sins away.
Wash all my sins away,
wash all my sins away;
and there may I, though vile as he,
wash all my sins away.

3. Dear dying Lamb, thy precious blood
shall never lose its power
till all the ransomed church of God
be saved, to sin no more.
Be saved, to sin no more,
be saved, to sin no more;
till all the ransomed church of God
be saved, to sin no more.

4. E'er since, by faith, I saw the

stream
thy flowing wounds supply,
redeeming love has been my theme,
and shall be till I die.
And shall be till I die,
and shall be till I die;
redeeming love has been my theme,
and shall be till I die.

5. Then in a nobler, sweeter song,
I'll sing thy power to save,
when this poor lisping, stammering
tongue
lies silent in the grave.
Lies silent in the grave,
lies silent in the grave;
when this poor lisping, stammering
tongue
lies silent in the grave.