



HISTORY BOOKS

BCtoAD: Bridal Theology Edition

A Course By Timothy Ministries

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RUTH & THE BASIS FOR OUR WARFARE

The Warrior Bride — Reclaiming The Land

Leviticus 25 (NIV):

- 23 “The land must not be sold permanently, because **the land is mine** and you are but aliens and my tenants.
24 Throughout the country that you hold as a possession, you must provide for the redemption of the land.
25 “If one of your countrymen becomes poor and sells some of his property, his nearest relative is to come and redeem what his countryman has sold. 26 If, however, a man has no one to redeem it for him but he himself prospers and acquires sufficient means to redeem it, 27 he is to determine the value for the years since he sold it and refund the balance to the man to whom he sold it; he can then go back to his own property. 28 But if he does not acquire the means to repay him, what he sold will remain in the possession of the buyer until the Year of Jubilee. It will be returned in the Jubilee, and he can then go back to his property.

Eschatological parallels to the kinsman-redeemer scenario from Lev 25.23-28 and Jer 32.1-15:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <p>A. A man receives a property as a perpetual inheritance.</p> <p>B. The man sells his inheritance and does not have the means to redeem it.</p> <p>C. A near relative buys (redeems) the property to keep it in the family.</p> <p>D. The deed is sealed and witnessed.</p> <p>E. Sometime later the sealed deed is brought forth.</p> <p>F. The redeemer takes possession of the property.</p> <p>G. Widow without heir is married to redeemer.</p> <p>H. The original family line once again exercises authority over the property.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Adam receives dominion of the _____, Gen. 1.26.</i>• <i>Adam & Eve “sell” their domain to _____, Gen. 3.6.</i>• <i>_____ pays man’s debt at the cross, 1 Cor. 1.30.</i>• <i>Redemption sealed by the _____, Eph. 1.13,14.</i>• <i>The sealed scroll held forth in _____, Rev. 5.1.</i>• <i>_____ takes possession of the _____, Rev. 11.15.</i>• <i>Humanity, widowed from law, married to the _____, Rom 7.4; Rev 19.7-9.</i>• <i>Holy humanity again _____ the _____, Rev. 5.10.</i> |
|---|--|

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- On what scriptural basis do we recognize that Satan and his angels are presently wielding authority over unbelievers on the earth?

Mat. 4.8-10

2 Cor. 4.4

Ephesians 2.2; 6.12

- On what scriptural basis do we take authority over demonic powers in our midst?

Col. 2.15

Eph. 1.5-14

Eph. 1.18-2.7

Heb. 2.14

1 John 3.8

- How does Boaz foreshadow our heavenly Bridegroom?

WHAT CAN RUTH TEACH THE
BRIDE OF CHRIST?



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JOSHUA & JUDGES WHO IS THIS BRIDEGROOM?

The Warrior Bride — Reclaiming The Land

Key Passages

Josh. 5.13-15 Now when Joshua was near Jericho, he looked up and saw a man standing in front of him with a drawn sword in his hand. Joshua went up to him and asked, “Are you for us or for our enemies?” ¶ “Neither,” he replied, “but as commander of the army of the LORD I have now come.” Then Joshua fell facedown to the ground in reverence, and asked him, “What message does my Lord have for his servant?” ¶ The commander of the LORD’s army replied, “Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy.” And Joshua did so.



Ex. 15.3 The LORD is a warrior;
the LORD is his name.

Judg. 1.12 And Caleb said, “The one who attacks Kiriath-sepher and captures it, **I will even give him my daughter Achsah for a wife.**” 13 Othniel the son of Kenaz, Caleb’s younger brother, captured it; so he gave him his daughter Achsah for a wife. 14 Then it came about when she came to him, that she persuaded him to ask her father for a field. Then she alighted from her donkey, and Caleb said to her, “What do you want?” 15 She said to him, “Give me a blessing, since you have given me the land of the Negev, give me also springs of water.” So Caleb gave her the upper springs and the lower springs.

Judg. 2.1-5 The angel of the LORD went up from Gilgal to Bokim and said, “I brought you up out of Egypt and led you into the land that I swore to give to your forefathers. I said, ‘I will never break my covenant with you, and you shall not make a covenant with the people of this land, but you shall break down their altars.’ Yet you have disobeyed me. Why have you done this? Now therefore I tell you that I will not drive them out before you; they will be [thorns] in your sides and their gods will be a snare to you.” ¶ When the angel of the LORD had spoken these things to all the Israelites, the people wept aloud, and they called that place Bokim. There they offered sacrifices to the LORD.

Judg. 3.1-4 These are the nations the LORD left to test all those Israelites who had not experienced any of the wars in Canaan (he did this only **to teach warfare to the descendants of the Israelites who had not had previous battle experience**): the five rulers of the Philistines, all the Canaanites, the Sidonians, and the Hivites living in the Lebanon mountains from Mount Baal Hermon to Lebo Hamath. They were left to test the Israelites to see whether they would obey the LORD’s commands, which he had given their forefathers through Moses.

Psa. 81.13 “**If my people would but listen to me, if Israel would follow my ways, 14 how quickly would I subdue their enemies and turn my hand against their foes!**”

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Why do we respond the way we do to the archetypal romance of the warrior who wins the bride?

- What are the seven disciplines of spiritual warfare?

1. _____ Ephesians 1.20-23; 6.10-12
2. _____ John 1.12-13
3. _____ [Acts 17.30](#); Rev. 3.19
4. _____ Ps. 81.13-14; Eph. 4.22-25,28
5. _____ 2 Cor. 4.2; Lev. 26.40
6. _____ James 4.7; 1 Peter 5.8-9
7. _____ Psalm 50.14-15,23 (NIV)

Vocabulary

Angel
Bokim
Bulla, bullae
Goel
Jubilee
Levirate marriage
Logos Asarkos
Malach YHVH
Moral (adj.), Amoral
Ontological
Phenomenological
Language
Recto, Verso
Redemption
Repentance (*Metanoia*)
Restitution
Sillybos, sillyboi
Sar Tseva YHVH
Tsel (Nm 14.9; Ps 17.8)

- What was the first message preached by both John the Baptist and by Jesus? Why did they emphasize this? (Matthew 3.2; 4.17; see also John 14.30)

- What is the natural ethical trend of fallen man and his cultures (Judges 17.6; 21.25)?

- How are Christians like ogres?





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CASTING DOWN STONGHOLDS IN 1 & 2 SAMUEL

The Warrior Bride — Reclaiming The Land

VOCABULARY

Apostasy
Confession
Consecrate
Discernment
Eschatology
Faith
Sacred
Shuv
Stronghold
Syncretism
Topos
Type, typology

Key Passages

2 Cor. 10.3-5: For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.

1 Samuel 2.35 I will raise up for myself a faithful priest, who will do according to what is in my heart and mind....

2 Samuel 1.26 I grieve for you, Jonathan my brother; you were very dear to me.

Your love for me was wonderful, more wonderful than that of women.

2 Samuel 22.1 David sang to the LORD the words of this song when the LORD delivered him from the hand of all his enemies and from the hand of Saul. 2 He said: “**The LORD is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer;** 3 my God is my rock, in whom I take refuge, my shield and the horn of my salvation. **He is my stronghold, my refuge and my savior...**

28 **You save the humble, but your eyes are on the haughty to bring them low.** 29 You are my lamp, O LORD; the LORD turns my darkness into light. 30 **With your help I can advance against a troop;** with my God I can scale a wall. 31 “As for God, his way is perfect; the word of the LORD is flawless. He is a shield for all who take refuge in him....

35 **He trains my hands for battle;** my arms can bend a bow of bronze....

44 “You have delivered me from the attacks of my people; you have preserved me as the head of nations. People I did not know are subject to me, 45 and foreigners come cringing to me; as soon as they hear me, they obey me. 46 They all lose heart; **they come trembling from their strongholds.** 47 “The LORD lives! Praise be to my Rock! Exalted be God, the Rock, my Savior! 48 He is the God who avenges me, who puts the nations under me, 49 **who sets me free from my enemies....**

2 Samuel 5.6-10 The king and his men marched to Jerusalem to attack the Jebusites, who lived there. The Jebusites said to David, “You will not get in here; even the blind and the lame can ward you off.” They thought, “David cannot get in here.” 7 Nevertheless, David captured the fortress of Zion, the City of David. 8 On that day, David said, “Anyone who conquers the Jebusites will have to use the water shaft to reach those ‘lame and blind’ who are David’s enemies.” That is why they say, “The ‘blind and lame’ will not enter the palace. 9 **David then took up residence in the fortress and called it the City of David. He built up the area around it, from the supporting terraces inward.** 10 **And he became more and more powerful, because the LORD God Almighty was with him.**

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- **How should we respond to spiritual strongholds in our lives?**

Paul says, *arm yourselves*, and the first piece of equipment he urges us to don is the belt of truth (Eph. 6.10-18). We arm ourselves by getting a good, solid grip on our situation, by getting some clarity on the battle over our lives.

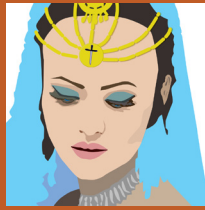
—John Eldredge, *Waking the Dead*, p. 16.

- **What spiritual strongholds were evident in Eli's life? In Samuel's? In Saul's? In David's?**

- **How should we understand the love between David and Jonathan (2 Samuel 1.26), and how does it illustrate the love between Christ and a Christian man?**

- **How does David foreshadow our heavenly Bridegroom, and how does he blur the picture?**

- **What can the Bride of Christ learn from the story of Michal (1Sa 18.20-29; 19. 11-17; 25.44; 2Sa 3.13-16; 6.16-23)?**



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The Idolatry Stronghold In 1 & 2 Kings

The Warrior Bride — Reclaiming The Land

VOCABULARY

Adultery
Asherah
Baal
Forgiveness
Holy, Holiness
Idols, Idolatry
Image
Stronghold
Summum Bonum
Syncretism
Ultimacy

Key Passages

1Kings 10.1 When the queen of Sheba heard about the fame of Solomon and his relation to the name of the LORD, she came to test him with hard questions.

1Kings 18.36-37 At the time of sacrifice, the prophet Elijah stepped forward and prayed: “O LORD, God of Abraham, Isaac and Israel, let it be known today that you are God in Israel and that I am your servant and have done all these things at your command. Answer me, O LORD, answer me, so these people will know that you, O LORD, are God, and that you are turning their hearts back again.”

2Kings 17.7 ¶ All this took place because the Israelites had sinned against the LORD their God, who had brought them up out of Egypt from under the power of Pharaoh king of Egypt. They worshiped other gods 8 and followed the practices of the nations the LORD had

driven out before them, as well as the practices that the kings of Israel had introduced. 9 The Israelites secretly did things against the LORD their God that were not right. From watchtower to fortified city they built themselves high places in all their towns. 10 They set up sacred stones and Asherah poles on every high hill and under every spreading tree. 11 At every high place they burned incense, as the nations whom the LORD had driven out before them had done. They did wicked things that provoked the LORD to anger. 12 They worshiped idols, though the LORD had said, “You shall not do this.” 13 The LORD warned Israel and Judah through all his prophets and seers: “Turn from your evil ways. Observe my commands and decrees, in accordance with the entire Law that I commanded your fathers to obey and that I delivered to you through my servants the prophets.”

2Kings 17.14 ¶ But they would not listen and were as stiff-necked as their fathers, who did not trust in the LORD their God. 15 They rejected his decrees and the covenant he had made with their fathers and the warnings he had given them. **They followed worthless idols and themselves became worthless.** They imitated the nations around them although the LORD had ordered them, “Do not do as they do,” and they did the things the LORD had forbidden them to do....

2Kings 17.18 ¶ So the LORD was very angry with Israel and removed them from his presence. Only the tribe of Judah was left, 19 and even Judah did not keep the commands of the LORD their God. They followed the practices Israel had introduced. 20 Therefore the LORD rejected all the people of Israel; he afflicted them and gave them into the hands of plunderers, until he thrust them from his presence.

2Kings 24.3 Surely at the command of the LORD it came upon Judah, to remove them from His sight because of the sins of Manasseh, according to all that he had done, 4 and also for the innocent blood which he shed, for **he filled Jerusalem with innocent blood; and the LORD would not forgive.**

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What is *faith*, by biblical definition?
- What distinguished YHVH from all other gods and goddesses?
- What was the essence of ancient idolatry?
- Two of the false deities that long ensnared Israel were Baal and Asherah. What were the imagined nature and character of this Canaanite god and goddess?
- How is “love of the world” different from the ancient idolatry?

James 4.4 You adulterous people, don't you know that friendship with the world is hatred toward God? Anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God. 5 Or do you think Scripture says without reason that the spirit he caused to live in us envies intensely?

1John 2.15 Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 16 For everything in the world — the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does — comes not from the Father but from the world. 17 The world and its desires pass away, but the man who does the will of God lives forever.

Catastrophic Marriages

- Adonijah and Abishag (for political motives); 1Ki 2.13-25.
- Solomon and his many foreign wives (for political alliances); 1Ki 11.
- Ahab and Jezebel (commitment to Baal worship); 1Ki 16-22; 2Ki 9. 30-37.
- Jehoram (Joram) and the daughter of Ahab; 2Ki 8.16-24; 2Ch 21.6.



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The Gift Of Prophecy In 1 & 2 Chronicles

The Warrior Bride — Reclaiming The Land

VOCABULARY

Chazon (Vision)
Counterfeit
Genealogy
Holy Spirit
Monarchy
Oracle
Prophecy
Prophesy
Sabbath
Theocracy

Key Passages

Proverbs 29.18 (KJV) Where there is no vision, the people perish: But he that keepeth the law, happy is he.

1Sam. 16.23 Whenever the spirit from God came upon Saul, David would take his harp and play. Then relief would come to Saul; he would feel better, and the evil spirit would leave him. ... **18.10-11** The next day an evil spirit from God came forcefully upon Saul. He was prophesying in his house, while David was playing the harp, as he usually did. Saul had a spear in his hand and he hurled it, saying to himself, "I'll pin David to the wall." But David eluded him twice.

1Sam. 19.19-24 Word came to Saul: "David is in Naioth at Ramah"; so he sent men to capture him. But when they saw a group of prophets prophesying, with Samuel standing there as their leader, the Spirit of God came upon Saul's men and they also prophesied. Saul was told about it, and he sent more men, and they prophesied too. Saul sent men a third time, and they also prophesied. Finally, he himself left for Ramah and went to the great cistern at Secu. And he asked, "Where are Samuel and David?" ¶ "Over in Naioth at Ramah," they said. ¶ So Saul went to Naioth at Ramah. But the Spirit of God came even upon him, and he walked along prophesying until he came to Naioth. He stripped off his robes and also prophesied in Samuel's presence. He lay that way all that day and night. This is why people say, "Is Saul also among the prophets?"

1Kings 18.13 Haven't you heard, my lord, what I did while Jezebel was killing the prophets of the LORD? I hid a hundred of the LORD's prophets in two caves, fifty in each, and supplied them with food and water.

1Chr. 25.1 David, together with the commanders of the army, set apart some of the sons of Asaph, Heman and Jeduthun for the ministry of prophesying, accompanied by harps, lyres and cymbals. Here is the list of the men who performed this service: ...

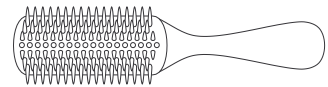
2 Chr. 16.9a "For the eyes of the LORD move to and fro throughout the earth that He may strongly support those whose heart is completely His." (NASB)

2Chr. 20.14-17 Then the Spirit of the LORD came upon Jahaziel son of Zechariah, the son of Benaiah, the son of Jeiel, the son of Mattaniah, a Levite and descendant of Asaph, as he stood in the assembly. He said: "Listen, King Jehoshaphat and all who live in Judah and Jerusalem! This is what the LORD says to you: 'Do not be afraid or discouraged because of this vast army. For the battle is not yours, but God's. Tomorrow march down against them. They will be climbing up by the Pass of Ziz, and you will find them at the end of the gorge in the Desert of Jeruel. You will not have to fight this battle. Take up your positions; stand firm and see the deliverance the LORD will give you, O Judah and Jerusalem. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged. Go out to face them tomorrow, and the LORD will be with you.'"

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Of the many prophets who lived during the times of the Kings of Israel, what made Samuel and Elijah and Elisha different?
- What was really going on when Saul was prophesying?
- What place should prophecy have in the church? What does music have to do with prophesying (1Ch 25.1-3)?
- How should we apply Deuteronomy 18.15-22 today?
- What should we do if we sense a prophetic calling upon our lives?
- What connection is there, if any, between prophecy and spiritual warfare?

Please download the related article, "The Church's Hairbrush," at:
<http://www.tmin.org/tminpages/archive.html>



WHAT CAN THE QUEEN OF SHEBA TEACH THE BRIDE OF CHRIST (2CH 9.1-12; MAT 12.42)?



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City Transformation In Ezra & Nehemiah

The Warrior Bride — Reclaiming The Land

VOCABULARY

Awakening
City Transformation
Revival
Syncretism

Key Passages (NIV)

Deut. 7.1-6 When the LORD your God brings you into the land you are entering to possess and drives out before you many nations — the Hittites, Girgashites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites, seven nations larger and stronger than you — 2 and when the LORD your God has delivered them over to you and you have defeated them, then you must destroy them totally. Make no treaty with them, and show them no mercy. **3 Do not intermarry with**

them. Do not give your daughters to their sons or take their daughters for your sons, 4 for they will turn your sons away from following me to serve other gods, and the LORD’s anger will burn against you and will quickly destroy you. 5 This is what you are to do to them: Break down their altars, smash their sacred stones, cut down their Asherah poles and burn their idols in the fire. 6 For you are a people holy to the LORD your God. The LORD your God has chosen you out of all the peoples on the face of the earth to be his people, **his treasured possession.**

Ezra 9.1-4 After these things had been done, the leaders came to me and said, “The people of Israel, including the priests and the Levites, have not kept themselves separate from the neighboring peoples with their detestable practices, like those of the Canaanites, Hittites, Perizzites, Jebusites, Ammonites, Moabites, Egyptians and Amorites. 2 They have taken some of their daughters as wives for themselves and their sons, and have mingled the holy race with the peoples around them. And the leaders and officials have led the way in this unfaithfulness.” 3 ¶ When I heard this, I tore my tunic and cloak, pulled hair from my head and beard and sat down appalled. 4 **Then everyone who trembled at the words of the God of Israel gathered around me** because of this unfaithfulness of the exiles. And I sat there appalled until the evening sacrifice.

Isaiah 58.6 (NASB) “Is this not the fast which I choose, To loosen the bonds of wickedness, To undo the bands of the yoke, And to let the oppressed go free And break every yoke? ...

12 “Those from among you will rebuild the ancient ruins;
You will raise up the age-old foundations;
And you will be called the repairer of the breach,
The restorer of the streets in which to dwell.”

What allowed the rebuilding of the community to begin?

- A. Daniel 9: Promise-based _____ and _____ .
- B. Ezra 1.1: God moved a _____ .
- C. Ezra 2.68-69: Material _____ .

What kinds of resistance came against the rebuilding?

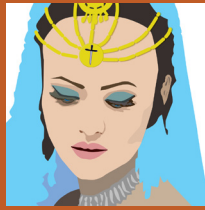
- A. Ezra 4.1-2: Attempts at _____
- B. Ezra 4.4-5: _____ (counselors hired against them)
- C. Ezra 4.7-16; Nehemiah 6.5-9: _____ and _____
- D. Neh. 4.1-3: Ridicule, _____
- E. Neh. 4.7-8: Armed _____
- F. Neh. 6.1-4: Attempts at _____
- G. Neh. 6.10-13: Intimidation, false _____ and temptation
- H. Neh. 6.17-18: Division of _____

How did the community hinder its own rebuilding?

- A. Ezra 4 & 5; Haggai 1: _____
- B. Neh. 5: Selfish and unjust _____ practices
- C. Neh. 13: _____ the laws of God

What occurrences allowed the rebuilding to progress?

- A. Ezra 5: The people claimed their _____ .
- B. Ezra 5.1-2; 6.14: God's _____ word was proclaimed.
- C. Neh. 8.1-9.3: The _____ were read.
- D. Ezra 8.21-23; Neh. 1.4: People _____ and prayed.
- E. Ezra 10: Compromising _____ were ended.**
- F. Neh. 4.13-23: God's people wore their _____ .
- G. Neh. 5: The people corrected their _____ practices.



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Leadership In Esther

The Warrior Bride — Reclaiming The Land

VOCABULARY

Apology
Apologetics
Esther
Hadassah
Marathon
Phidippides
Providence
Salamis
Spartans
Sovereignty (1Ch 29.12)
Thermopylae

What do we learn of Esther's character in these passages?

Esther 2.7 Mordecai had a cousin named Hadassah, whom he had brought up because she had neither father nor mother. This girl, who was also known as Esther, was lovely in form and features, and Mordecai had taken her as his own daughter when her father and mother died.

Esth. 2.10 Esther had not revealed her nationality and family background, because Mordecai had forbidden her to do so...²⁰ But Esther had kept secret her family background and nationality just as Mordecai had told her to do, for she continued to follow Mordecai's instructions as she had done when he was bringing her up.

Esth. 2.15 When the turn came for Esther (the girl Mordecai had adopted, the daughter of his uncle Abihail) to go to the king, she asked for nothing other than what Hegai, the king's eunuch who was in charge of the harem, suggested. And Esther won the favor of everyone who saw her.

Esth. 4.4 When Esther's maids and eunuchs came and told her about Mordecai, she was in great distress. She sent clothes for him to put on instead of his sackcloth, but he would not accept them.

Esth. 4.15 Then Esther sent this reply to Mordecai: 16 “Go, gather together all the Jews who are in Susa, and fast for me. Do not eat or drink for three days, night or day. I and my maids will fast as you do. When this is done, I will go to the king, even though it is against the law. And if I perish, I perish.”

Esth. 5.1 On the third day Esther put on her royal robes and stood in the inner court of the palace, in front of the king’s hall. The king was sitting on his royal throne in the hall, facing the entrance. 2 When he saw Queen Esther standing in the court, he was pleased with her and held out to her the gold scepter that was in his hand. So Esther approached and touched the tip of the scepter.

Esth. 5.3 Then the king asked, “What is it, Queen Esther? What is your request? Even up to half the kingdom, it will be given you.”

Esth. 5.4 “If it pleases the king,” replied Esther, “let the king, together with Haman, come today to a banquet I have prepared for him.”

Esth. 5.5 “Bring Haman at once,” the king said, “so that we may do what Esther asks.”

So the king and Haman went to the banquet Esther had prepared. 6 As they were drinking wine, the king again asked Esther, “Now what is your petition? It will be given you. And what is your request? Even up to half the kingdom, it will be granted.”

Esth. 5.7 Esther replied, “My petition and my request is this: 8 If the king regards me with favor and if it pleases the king to grant my petition and fulfill my request, let the king and Haman come tomorrow to the banquet I will prepare for them. Then I will answer the king’s question.”

WHAT CAN ESTHER TEACH THE BRIDE OF CHRIST?

Detail from painting by Ernest Normand (1857-1923)



My Spiritual/Relational Landscape

My Neighbor's Spiritual/Relational Landscape

BRIDES OF ISRAEL'S HISTORY

How did these women portray aspects of
The Bride? What can The Bride learn from them?

- 1. Rahab**
- 2. Achsah (Jos 15; Jdg 1; 1Ch 2.49)**
- 3. Deborah**
- 4. Ruth**
- 5. Hannah**
- 6. Michal**
- 7. Abigail**
- 8. Bathsheba**
- 9. The Shunammite (2Ki 4)**
- 10. Esther**



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The Armor Of God In Ephesians 6

The Warrior Bride — Reclaiming The Land



In our strategic time, it's vital that we understand seven things about the Armor of God described in Ephesians 6.10-20:

(1) **The battle that Paul speaks of is real.** The battle involves real casualties and real victories. Paul uses material armor as a metaphor for spiritual armor, but he does not use the word *battle* as a metaphor for something else.

(2) **The darkness Paul felt was demonic (Eph 6.12).** Paul lived during a demonic backlash to the coming of Jesus and the outpouring of God's Spirit. The palpable darkness of our day may well have to do with an agitation in the spiritual realm due to the *soon return* of Jesus. The king of the demon army is "the father of lies" (John 8.44), and so it should not surprise us that the battle is a fight against false arguments and pretentious opinions (2 Corinthians 10.3-5). Satan's minions have brought about a unique situation in human history: There has always been moral darkness in the world, but for the first time, human culture is now *redefining* darkness as light.

(3) **The battle is "our battle" (Eph 6.12)** Yes, the battle is fought and won by the power of God's Spirit (cf. Zechariah 4.6), and on the basis of Christ's redemptive work, but it is a battle for *our* hearts and minds and for the hearts and minds of our loved ones and neighbors. We are unavoidably in the midst of the battle and God has called us to join the fight.

(4) **The armor is the armor that Jesus wore.** The phrase, "the armor of God," can be understood in two ways:

- a. the armor that God produced, or
- b. the armor that God owns.

(Technically, the Greek phrase is either a genitive of source/origin or a genitive of possession/ownership.) We have often assumed that the armor of God is simply the armor that He has produced and made available to us (option a.). However, in writing the Ephesians 6 passage, Paul quoted (or alluded to) Isaiah 11.5; 52.7; 59.17; Nahum 1.15 and the Wisdom of Solomon 5.19. All of these passages refer to the Messiah going forth to battle to bring about salvation! We must realize, therefore, that as King Saul foolishly tried to clothe young David with ineffective material armor (1Samuel 17.38-39), King Jesus wisely clothes us in the very armor He used so effectively in His earthly ministry.

(5) **Paul's message (and the primary application of Eph 6.10-20) was for the corporate body.** That the armor is the armor Jesus wore, tells us that there is an individual application of the Armor-of-God passage for each of us.

Nevertheless, the corporate plural words throughout the passage (more visible in the Greek text), show that Paul urged the Ephesian church to put on the armor *corporately*. To truly understand the passage, we must ask ourselves, “What does it look like for a congregation, *as a congregation*, to put on the belt of truth, the breastplate of righteousness, the shoes of the gospel, the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation, and to take up the sword of the Spirit?”

Understanding the armor as the armor of Jesus will help us answer the question of corporate application. For example, we have often interpreted the shield of faith as our personal faith in Jesus for salvation. However, that is not the shield that Jesus used. The Greek word describing the shield should be translated *faithfulness* rather than *faith*. Jesus used a shield of *faithfulness* to the Father’s character and agenda, such that no “flaming arrow” of accusation could stop Him. Likewise, a congregation who takes up the shield of *faithfulness* to God and to one another, will not be destroyed by slander from without nor gossip from within.

(6) The “sword of the Spirit” (Eph 6.17) is primarily wielded by “prayer and petition” (Eph 6.18). The grammatical structure of the underlying Greek text of these verses implies that prayer “at all times in the Spirit” is how we use the sword of God’s word in the battle against false ideas and beliefs. It’s important to remember that we do not use this sword to stab or cut people, but to fend off falsehoods that are zooming toward people’s minds and to cut off lies that have attached to their hearts. We must do this for one another in our congregations in up-close and personal prayer.

(7) Paul’s exhortation to “Stand” (Eph 6.14) implies that we have won territory. Hallelujah! The reason to put on the armor is hold the ground God has given us, and to not allow the enemy to push us backward. We must **stand firm** on the territory we have gained for God’s kingdom in our own fellowships, in our own neighborhoods and in our own character.

Amen! As congregations, let us strengthen our resolve — by the grace of God — to stand firm for the Way, the Truth and the Life in this “evil day.” ❖ Roderick Graciano

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- How has taking up responsibility in the battle changed my life?
- What specific prayer battle has God called me to fight to the end?
- What territory have I won that I need to protect by standing firm?