

**EPHESIANS – THE MYSTERY OF GOD’S CHURCH –
OUR IDENTITY, OUR WALK, OUR WARFARE
PROGRAM 3 (#912183)
WEEK 1 (912341)
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**SERIES: Ephesians – The Mystery Of God’s Church –
Our Identity, Our Walk, Our Warfare
TITLE: Program 3 – The Sword Of The Spirit Is God’s Word**

WEDNESDAY

OPEN

Have you ever wondered how much power does the devil have? So many times we’ve said, “The devil made me do it.” In all probability you did it because you belonged to the devil. But did the devil make you do it? What can the devil make you do? And what is your means of resisting the devil? Well that’s what we’re going to look at today as we look at the book of Ephesians, a book that tells us about the power of being in Christ.

PART ONE

When you think of Ephesus and you think of the letter to the Ephesians you have to think about spiritual warfare. You have to think about the power of the enemy, because when you understand the background of the people living in Ephesus, you can understand why Paul wrote what he wrote, why

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he told them that they would be blessed with every spiritual blessing in heavenly places. Now your assignment was to read through Ephesians. Your assignment was to mark every reference to Paul because he was the author, every reference to the Ephesians because they were the ones that Paul was writing to, the recipients. We told you to mark every reference to Paul in blue and every reference to the Ephesians in the color orange, so that you could look down and see what you can learn about the Ephesians just from what he says to them. Well as you read through the book of Ephesians one of the things you see him talking about is you see him talking about the fact that they are Gentiles. And in Ephesians chapter 2, verse 11 it would say: **“Therefore remember that formerly you, the Gentiles in the flesh, who are called ‘Uncircumcision’ by the so-called ‘Circumcision’....”** And he goes on and he talks about the Gentiles, Gentiles in the flesh, you were born a Gentile. Alright, so one of the things you would have written about the Ephesians when you made your list, when you looked at every place that you marked, every place you colored orange and you wrote down what you learned about them, what the text told you about who or what or when or why or where or how. Those are the five W’s and an H. And so you would mark that and you would say, hey, they were Gentiles. All right, and then you come to chapter 3, verse 1, and it says, **“For this reason I, Paul...,”** which you would mark blue, **“...the prisoner of Christ Jesus, for the sake of you Gentiles.” (3:1)** Well there you would write down, oh, Paul was a prisoner. He was a prisoner for the sake of the Gentiles. He was a prisoner of Jesus Christ. And you would find out in studying the text that Paul was put in prison for preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ. He was put in prison for taking the gospel to the Gentiles. All right, and so he was a prisoner for the sake of the Gentiles. You would put down again that these that he was writing to were Gentiles. Now when you study the Bible inductively, and by inductive, let me just explain it again. Inductive means you remove the middle man and you go directly to the Word of God yourself. A middle man

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would be a teacher. You say, well are teachers wrong? Well then I shouldn't be teaching if they are. And you shouldn't have a pastor. No, a pastor is very important; he's to be your pastor/teacher, your shepherd and your teacher. But God also wants you and I to be able to study God's Word for ourselves so that I know whether what I'm being taught is right or wrong. So I've got to know truth. I've got to discover it for myself. Now that's why we offer you a free study guide, go to "preceptsforlife.com" and download a free study guide, a study guide that will help you learn the skills of observation, discovering what does the text say, interpretation, understanding what does it mean, and then application, knowing how you're to live in the light of it, or how you're to change your thinking. And and I just put my hands on my cheek bones and go, and turn my head because application many times is not always doing something. Sometimes it's simply saying, hey, I believe the wrong thing and I'm going to change my mind. Now those are the basic steps of inductive Bible study, observing, discovering what does the text say, interpreting it, what does it mean, and if you'll do your observation and you'll observe and you'll observe and you'll observe and you'll look at it and discover what it says, and follow these study skills that we're teaching you, then you're going to have interpretation fall in your lap, because God says what He means and He means what He says, and Scripture interprets Scripture, I mean you're going to learn. And so then, you take what you learn and you apply it. Now remember in the opening to this program we talked about warfare. We talked about the devil. We talked about being afraid of him. We talked about being under his power. And as you studied through Ephesians you saw that they were under his power, because when you made the list, in Ephesians chapter 2, it says in verse 1: **"And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, 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 ...working in the sons of disobedience."** (Ephesians 2:1-2) And when you read that and when you

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get to the lesson, when we come to that, one of the things we would tell you is put a red pitchfork over every reference to the devil, over every reference to evil spirits, because then you can see if the devil's on any page, and you put that red pitchfork there and then you can get, you know, a profile on the devil so that you know what he's like, you know what his tactics are like and you know what to do. Well, you see that these people, these Gentiles in Ephesus walk according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is working in the sons of disobedience. Now, just think with me, think planet earth; that's where we are, that's where we're sitting, that's where we're standing, that's where we're moving, that's where we're living. Then think about the air, not the atmosphere, but the stratosphere. Go beyond the atmosphere to what you can see, and go up there and there is a prince, a prince of the power of the air. He is a spirit and he is working in the sons of disobedience, in those who have refused to believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Messiah, that He is the Son of God and that He is the only way to God. So if people do not believe that then what has happened to them is they are sons of disobedience and they are walking according to the prince of the power of the air, according to this world. Now 1 John chapter 5, verse 19 tells us that **"...the whole world lies in the power of the evil one."** All right, so we're going through, you're studying, you're making this list of everything that you learn about the Ephesians. Well if you really want to understand what Paul is telling you you need to find out does he talk about Ephesus anyplace else in the Scriptures? And the answer is yes, he talks about Ephesus in the book of Acts. Now what I want us to do is I want us to go back to Acts chapter 9. I want us to go back to the time when Paul became a child of God. Remember he was on the road to Damascus, remember he was persecuting Christians. And remember that he was in darkness because he did not believe in the Light of the world, the Lord Jesus Christ. As a matter of fact, he was persecuting those who were of the Way, those who were followers of Jesus Christ. Jesus had said, ["I am

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the way, I am the truth and I am the life, and no one comes to the Father, but by Me.”] (Paraphrased, John 14:6) Well Paul did not like that. His name was Saul and Saul is his Jewish name and Paul is his Gentile equivalent. So in Acts chapter 9 he’s referred to as Saul. So Saul’s going out, he’s arresting them; he’s putting them in prison. He’s consenting to their death. And all of a sudden a light appears to him; we know that Light is Jesus. And Jesus says to him, [“Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?”] (Paraphrased, Acts 9:4) **“And [Saul says to Him], ‘Who are you...?’ And He [says], ‘I am Jesus whom you are persecuting.’” (Acts 9:5)** Well, at that moment Saul can no longer see. For the next three days, and you can go back and you can read Acts chapter 9, after the program’s over. But for the next three days Paul doesn’t eat, he doesn’t drink, and he sits in absolute darkness and he is praying. Now one of the things that we have to remember is when God is going after those that He has chosen before the foundation of the world, those that He wants to adopt as children into His dear family, He will move heaven and earth to reach them. And this is what’s happening among many many Muslims. Many Muslims are having visions. They’re having dreams. And in that vision, in that dream they see a man in white. And that man says, “I’m Jesus.” And many times it’s Jesus whom they are persecuting, because they’re persecuting other Christians, and they’re persecuting Christians and they’re persecuting Jews because they have been told and taught in the Koran that they are the enemy and they need to get rid of them. And when they are persecuting them or when they are searching for God or they want to know God in the earnestness of their heart, they will have a vision. And do you know what happens when many of them are having that vision? It’s very similar to what happened to the apostle Paul, because God is about to deliver them out of the kingdom of darkness and bring them into His glorious light to take them from the power of Satan and let them know the power of Jesus. What happens? I’ll tell you right after this important announcement. It’s exciting; you don’t want to miss it.

PART TWO

I knew you’d come back. I would come back too, because I would want to know. Is it really happening? Oh yes! There’s story after story about Muslims coming to know Jesus Christ. How do they know? Well many times what happens is the “Jesus” film comes in, and when the “Jesus” film is shown they see it and they say, “That’s the Man, that’s the Man that I saw in my dreams! That’s the Man I saw in my vision, or that’s the Man that appeared to me.” And they come to know Jesus Christ. Campus Crusade could tell you those stories. We share the “Jesus” film in our ministry overseas. It’s a wonderful wonderful movie. But we can tell you story after story of that way that God brings people to Himself. You see sometimes they don’t have the Word of God. Sometimes they’re not going to hear the Word of God. It’s not in a country like ours, and so God will move heaven and earth to bring them to Himself, those that are hungry, those that are thirsting for righteousness, those that long to know truth, those that want truth and not a lie. Well, there were people in Ephesus that were Gentiles. As you know, there were Jews living there, but there were Gentiles. It was primarily a Gentile city, and God sent Paul to Ephesus. Let’s see how it happened. I want to go back to Acts chapter 9 very quickly, because when Ananias appears to Saul and lays his hands on him, he’s doing it because this is what God has told Ananias. Ananias is afraid of Paul because he has heard what Paul has been doing and he says, [“Lord, now are You sure?”] Because Ananias has a vision. [“Are You sure You want me to go?”] (Paraphrased, Acts 9:13-14) And God says to him, “...Go...,” in verse 15, “...for he is a chosen instrument of Mine, to bear My name before the Gentiles and kings and the sons of Israel; [and] I will show him how much he must suffer for My name’s sake.” (Acts 9:15-16) He would suffer prison for the sake of being obedient to Jesus Christ and taking the message to the Gentiles. Well that’s in Acts chapter 9. And what we want to do is we want

to go to Acts chapter 18. Because in Acts chapter 18 and verse 18 Paul is on a missionary journey. He’s on his second missionary journey. And on that second missionary journey it says in verse 18, **“Paul, having remained many days longer...,”** and this is in Corinth, says, **“...took leave of the brethren and put out to sea for Syria, and with him were Priscilla and Aquila. In Cenchrea...,”** and I’ve stood at the Port of Cenchrea and it’s just a little sandy beach right now, **“...he had his hair cut, for he was keeping a vow. They came to Ephesus....” (Acts 18:18-19a)** So he leaves Cenchrea which is down south of Corinth and he sails over across the Aegean Sea and he lands and he goes to the city of Ephesus. It’s near present day Kusadasi today in the western part of Turkey. And he gets there and he says he came to Ephesus and he **“...entered the synagogue and reasoned with the Jews.” (Acts 18:19b)** Now this is what he always did. He went to the Jew first, because the gospel went to the Jew first. You’re going to appreciate that much more later in the book of Ephesians when we look at it. And it says, **“When they asked him to stay for a longer time, he did not consent, but taking leave of them and saying, ‘I will return to you again if God wills....’” (18:20-21a)** He was a man that knew that God was to be in charge of his life and he only wanted to do what God wanted him to do. What about you, Beloved? I’m telling you this is the way that you have victory over the evil one. You say, “God I choose you and God I will to do Your will, no matter the cost, even if I suffer, I’m going to be Your man, I’m going to be Your woman.” And if you say that to God, God’s going to use you mightily in His own individual way **“...according to the kind intention of His will.” (Ephesians 1:5b)** You’ll see that phrase in the book of Ephesians. And he says, **“...I will return...again if God wills,’ [and] he set sail from Ephesus.” (Acts 18:21b)** Well when he’s on his third missionary journey he comes to Ephesus. And in verse 8 it says, **“...he entered the synagogue...,”** of Acts chapter 19, **“...He entered the synagogue and continued speaking out boldly for three months,**

reasoning and persuading them...,” now these are the Jews, “...about the kingdom of God. But when some were becoming hardened and disobedient, speaking evil of the Way before the people, he withdrew from them and took away the disciples, reasoning daily in the school of Tyrannus.” (Acts 19:8-9) He went to a school, a Gentile school. And it says, “[And] God was performing....” (19:11a) “[And] this took place for two years, so that all who lived in Asia...,” (19:10a) now Asia in those days is not the Asia we think of today. But Asia is western Turkey. “...So that all who lived in Asia heard the word of the Lord, both Jews and Gentiles. [And] God was performing extraordinary miracles by the hand of Paul, so that handkerchiefs or aprons were even carried from his body to the sick, and the diseases left them and the evil spirits went out.”(19:10b-12) That’s where you want to put a red pitchfork, because the evil spirits were leaving because Jesus had come through the ministry of Paul. And it says, “But also some of the Jewish exorcists, who went from place to place, attempted to name over those who had...evil spirits the name of the Lord Jesus, saying, ‘I adjure you by [the name of] Jesus whom Paul preaches.’ ” (19:13) And so they would go. They saw Paul do it and they’d say Paul said it in the name of Jesus; I’ll do it in the name of Jesus whom Paul preaches. Well listen to what happens. And it says, “[And] seven sons of one Sceva, a Jewish chief priest, were doing this. And the evil spirit answered and said to them, ‘I recognize Jesus, and I know about Paul, but who are you?’ And the man, in whom was the evil..., leaped on them and subdued all of them and overpowered them so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded. This became known to [both] all, [to] both Jews and Greeks, who lived in Ephesus; and fear fell upon them all and the name of the Lord Jesus was being magnified.” (19:14-17) What do we see here? We see the power of the name of Jesus when it’s spoken by a believer in Jesus. We see that it is a power that subdues the power of the evil one. Now this was a city in which there was

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the great temple of Artemis. And this temple drew believers in Artemis from all over the world. They came to worship Artemis, or her name was Diana. It became a real source of income to that city. And I mean they developed their own bank and everything. People came from all over. Well know this, that Corinthians teaches us, behind every idol there is an evil spirit. So this was a city sitting in great darkness. This was a Gentile city with a few Jews there, but the Jews hadn't come to know Jesus Christ and so Satan reigned. They were living according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that works in the sons of disobedience, but Paul came and he brought the message of life, the message of freedom, the truth that sets you free. And that's why he opens up and says, "[He has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.]" (Paraphrased, Ephesians 1:3) That's why he's going to tell them that He has put all things in subjection under the feet of Jesus. Principalities and powers and rulers and spiritual wickedness in high places are all under the feet of Jesus. O Beloved, this is what we're going to see as we study the book of Ephesians. You need not fear if Christ is in you, for **"...greater is He [that's] in you than he [that's] in the world."** (1 John 4:4b)