

New Morning Magical

Fight the Right Giants

Today we're finishing the Apostle Paul's letter to the Ephesians. Toward the end of Chapter 6, Paul admonishes the ecclesia to "armor up," and his instruction is as important for you and me today as it was nearly 2000 years ago. So, let's go to Ephesians 6:11:

11 Put on the panoply [*or complete armor*] of God, to enable you to stand up to the stratagems of the Adversary,
12 for it is not ours to wrestle with blood and flesh, but with the sovereignties, with the authorities, with the world-mights of this darkness, with the spiritual forces of wickedness among the celestials.

Let me stop here a moment. Look at Paul's phrase at the beginning of verse 12: "*for it is not ours to wrestle with blood and flesh.*" He does NOT say flesh and blood, even though your Bible may be worded as such.

OK, well what's the big deal here? Paul is addressing the battles we fight within ourselves, whether with our own "seductive desires" coming from the "old humanity," both of which we've looked at before; or even physical conditions that we earn through the habits we develop in the only areas of our lives that we actually control: what we eat and drink, how and what we breathe, how we exercise (or don't), how we rest; what we think, feel, and believe rolled into one; what we speak; and how we nurture our spirits.

In other words, Paul says, you and I aren't supposed to be preoccupied dealing with – or wrestling with – stuff going on inside us. We have bigger opponents to wrestle with; namely, spiritual authorities of varying ranks who aren't the least bit interested in our success. Paul's next verses are all geared toward seeing to it that we understand and then employ the spiritual implements, which the Father has provided to gain the victory over every opposing force we may encounter.

The subject of wrestling with blood and flesh was the focus of one of our Light Up the Scriptures teleconferences, and it's worth sharing with you, but first, let's look at what Paul calls "*the panoply [or complete armor] of God.*"

13 Therefore take up the panoply of God that you may be enabled to withstand in the wicked day, and having effected all, to stand.
14 Stand, then, girded about your loins with truth, with the cuirass of righteousness put

on,

15 and your feet sandaled with the readiness of the evangel of peace;

16 with all taking up the large shield of faith, by which you will be able to extinguish all the fiery arrows of the wicked one.

17 And receive the helmet of salvation and the sword of the spirit, which is a declaration of God.

We'll get into the panoply in detail, but first, let's look deeper into this business of wrestling with blood and flesh, because it contains important ideas and principles that can really help us today.

It's probably important also to mention that the spiritual realm in Ephesians 6:12 – the sovereignties, authorities, world-mights of this darkness, and spiritual forces of wickedness among the celestials may sound a bit threatening, but it's important to know your opposition, be aware of them, and most importantly, to be wise about the spirit realm all around you; so you can fight the right giants.

Ephesians 6:

12 for it is not ours to wrestle with **blood and flesh**, but with the sovereignties, with the authorities, with the world-mights of this darkness, with the spiritual forces of wickedness among the celestials.

13 Therefore take up the panoply of God that you may be enabled to withstand in the wicked day, and having effected all, to stand.

Note the word order in verse 12: **blood and flesh**

If you search through the English versions in Bible Gateway, you'll find only two that agree with that word order: Young's literal and the Darby translation. The other versions render the words "flesh and blood," or "humans," "human enemies," "human beings," "a human opponent," "people on the earth." Two versions were so badly paraphrased that they missed it entirely!

This phrase, **blood and flesh** appears one other place in the Greek text:

Hebrews 2:14, but start in verse 9 to get the context:

9 Yet we are observing Jesus, Who has been made some bit inferior to messengers (because of the suffering of death, wreathed with glory and honor), so that in the grace of God, He should be tasting death for the sake of everyone.

10 For it became Him, because of Whom all is, and through Whom all is, in leading many

sons into glory, to perfect the Inaugurator of their salvation through sufferings.

11 For both He Who is hallowing and those who are being hallowed are all of One, for which cause He is not ashamed to be calling them brethren,

12 saying, I shall be reporting Thy name to My brethren, In the midst of the ecclesia shall I be singing hymns to Thee.

13 And again, I shall have confidence in Him. And again, Lo! I and the little children who are given Me by God!

14 Since, then, the little children have participated in **blood and flesh**, He also was very nigh by partaking of the same, that, through death, He should be discarding him who has the might of death, that is, the Adversary,

I'm curious about two things now:

1) The significance of the word order "blood and flesh"

2) This phrase: *the little children have **participated** in blood and flesh*

Participate, in Greek is to share in common; **contribute** by sharing with others; Thayer's Lexicon says, **come into** communion or fellowship with, to **become** a sharer, be made a partner; to **enter into** fellowship, **join one's self** to an associate, **make one's self** a sharer or partner.

Can you see how active everything is in the word, "participate"? This does NOT appear to be a passive role, but an active one in which we engage ourselves!

One would suppose that our "**participation**" in "**blood and flesh**," that is, our nature as human beings, was involuntary, by virtue of our birth into Adam's race. That's not how this seems to read, however. This participation seems to be entirely active, voluntary, and willing on our parts.

Now go back to the phrase, "**blood and flesh**" – actually, let's look now at the phrase, "flesh and blood" and see what may be different about that word order.

Matthew 16:

15 ... "Now you, who are you saying that I am?"

16 Now answering, Simon Peter said, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God."

17 Now, answering, Jesus said to him, "Happy are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for **flesh and blood** does not reveal it to you, but My Father Who is in the heavens.

Galatians 1:16, start in verse 11:

11 For I am making known to you, brethren, as to the evangel which is being brought by me, that **it is not in accord with man**. [*This sets up the context.*]

12 For neither did I accept it from a man, nor was I taught it, but it came through a

revelation of Jesus Christ.

13 For you hear of my behavior once, in Judaism, that I inordinately persecuted the ecclesia of God and ravaged it.

14 And I progressed in Judaism above many contemporaries in my race, being inherently exceedingly more zealous for the traditions of my fathers.

15 Now, when it delights God, Who severs me from my mother's womb and calls me through His grace,

16 to unveil His Son in me that I may be evangelizing Him among the nations, **I did not immediately submit it to flesh and blood,**

17 neither came I up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me, but I came away into Arabia, and I return again to Damascus.

18 Thereupon, after three years, I came up to Jerusalem to relate my story to Cephas, and I stay with him fifteen days.

1 Corinthians 15:50

50 Now this I am averring, brethren, that **flesh and blood** is not able to enjoy an allotment in the kingdom of God, neither is corruption enjoying the allotment of incorruption.

Earlier in the Corinthian text, Paul thoroughly established the context clearly denoting this “flesh and blood” as referring to human beings.

“Flesh and Blood” appears 17 times in the OT – NIV, 9 in Darby, 2 in New Century, and 7 in New Living Tr. Put up Bible Gateway and see. The phrase is missing from KJV, NASB and lots of others, including Young’s Literal!

The key here is to see how literal all of the OT scriptures are that refer to “flesh and blood.” In each case the phrase denoted direct blood line or extended family (as in Israel greeting David at Hebron in **1 Chronicles 11**). The CLV is even more specific, referring to “*your own sons,*” or “*your own flesh*” in two Isaiah passages that show up in the NIV.

The point to all this is that flesh and blood is NOT what Paul was referring to in Ephesians, and it isn’t what the author of Hebrews meant either. Both are literal, and “correctly cutting the word of the truth” demands that we discover and apply the difference correctly. I believe that God’s wisdom—the secrets of His heart—are contained in these kinds of distinctions. Remember that Scripture is “inspired writing”—inspired by God. Therefore, when two similar terms are used, such as “blood and flesh” and “flesh and blood,” it behooves us to ask why the difference and what its significance indicates.

Where we're going next is what I discern—what I believe God has revealed to me—so be forewarned. Since the scriptures only occur twice, written by different authors to different audiences for different purposes, I admit to being out on the edge in what I'm about to say. I ask you to pray about it, seek God about it, and ask for wisdom and understanding...

Father, I do now ask for understanding and wisdom here. Lord, I am not—and we are not—interested adding to or subtracting from Your word. I believe You are showing something unusual in this study tonight...but I ask You for revelation, clarity and correction, together with wisdom and understanding; that we may peer into Your heart and mind, Father, if by any means, for You are the One and the Only Wise God. And we are Your children, beloved by You, recipients of Your great love and Grace in Christ Jesus, Our Lord, and it is in His Holy Name, I pray. AMEN.

I'm drawing on a principle we have studied several times before, and that is that when something occurs twice in the scriptures, such as Pharaoh's two dreams that Joseph interpreted. Let's look again at it again:

Genesis 41:32

The reason the dream was given to Pharaoh in two forms is that the matter has been firmly decided by God, and God will do it soon.

Also, **Deuteronomy 19:15:**

A matter must be **established** by the testimony of two or three witnesses.

"Blood and flesh," – that specific phrase occurs exactly twice in the scriptures. It **has** to be significant.

Here's why this seems so pressing to me: It's about the importance and power of declarations; that is, those declarations we make as we wield the sword of the Spirit, which is "*a declaration of God.*"

Recently, a young mother died – 42 years old with two sons; a prominent attorney. Cancer ate her alive – at least that's what everyone said. Barbara and I learned about her from a mutual friend, and I spoke with her by phone in November last year. I witnessed to her that what God showed me: her condition followed the "iron rule" of cancer (actually, I've learned that the "iron rule" applies to virtually any physical condition we don't like and don't want)...that is, every cancer starts with a severe emotional trauma or shock, one that is experienced in a sense of profound loneliness, and is felt by the person as the most serious trauma of their lives. I also explained that when we address the trauma successfully, healing is inevitable.

When I told the woman all this, her spirit bore witness immediately, and she even seemed excited at the prospect of resolving the trauma—which she identified immediately—and healing from a condition that already threatened her life at that time.

Follow this now, in relation to our study. This woman had been busy for about two years wrestling with blood and flesh (not flesh and blood)! She fought cancer. She fought the wrong giant—the wrong Goliath. She wrestled against a disease—that which affected her blood (the means of transporting nutrients as well as toxins, healthy and unhealthy cells, throughout the body; and her flesh (where tumors manifested)—her blood and flesh, carrying the disease of anger, bitterness, resentment, and even a death wish that perhaps was unspoken but was felt profoundly. She wasted away from the inside out and died as a result, leaving her own flesh and blood (her sons) without a mother.

She even delegated the wrestling to *others* whom she trusted—whom she feared—more than God. They too fought the wrong giant. Everyone who knew her wrestled with the same thing, blood and flesh—a disease that was actually her body's solution to the real wrestling match she and everyone else neglected against the sovereignties, with the authorities, with the world-mights of this darkness, with the spiritual forces of wickedness among the celestials.

If blood and flesh has our attention today, in such a way that we are wrestling with it, rather than with the sovereignties, with the authorities, with the world-mights of this darkness, with the spiritual forces of wickedness among the celestials, I'm putting us all on notice in front of Them and before God, we will lose ultimately. Like this young mother, we will be distracted by the obvious—the seen—and miss all that God could have taught us.

Wrestling with blood and flesh results from a failure to follow Paul's next instruction:

Ephesians 6:13

13 Therefore take up the panoply of God that you may be enabled to withstand in the wicked day, and having effected all, to stand.

Without the panoply—the full armor of God, which He has provided—we are unequipped for the real battle in the spirit realm. We will focus, rely on, put our faith and trust in flesh and blood as we wrestle against blood and flesh...our own.

This is a good place to stop today, so until next time,

May Yahweh bless you and keep you;
May Yahweh light up His face toward you
and be gracious to you;
May Yahweh lift His face to you
and appoint peace for you.

AMEN