

1. We are in a Spiritual Battle

The Armor of God

📖 Read Eph 6:10-13

In Ephesians chapters 1-3 we learn about the *blessings* of salvation, and in 4-6 we learn about the *responsibilities* of salvation. The Christian's responsibilities include *walking worthy of his calling* (Eph 4:1), *walking in humility* (Eph 4:2), *walking in unity* (Eph 4:3), and *walking in the Spirit* (Eph 4:17-32). When he lives a life of obedience toward God in this way he will, without a doubt, face satanic and demonic opposition. For this reason, Paul exhorted the Ephesians in 6:10 to “*be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.*”

We should not automatically assume that when trouble or temptations come into our lives we have done something wrong. There are times when we face trials because God is seeking to strengthen our faith (1 Peter 5:10; James 1:2-4). There are other times when we are drawn away into temptation by our own inward lusts (James 1:14). But other times still, we face opposition from Satan himself (1 Peter 5:8; Eph 6:11,16). It may be that some of the struggles and temptations we endure are actually a demonic attack designed to shake our faith (Luke 22:31). These attacks seem to come most, not when Christians are doing wrong, but when they are experiencing a measure of spiritual victory. Sometimes we face persecution and opposition because of what we are *doing right!*

Our Empowerment – His Mighty Power

The fact that we are in a spiritual battle should not frighten or discourage us, because God has provided all the power necessary for us to emerge as victors.

📖 Eph 6:10. **Q.** In what two areas did Paul exhort the Ephesians to *be strong*?

The *power of his might* is a recurring theme in the book of Ephesians. In chapter 1 Paul told the Ephesians that he was praying for them. He desired that the *eyes of [their] understanding* would be *enlightened*.

📖 Eph 1:18-19. **Q.** In what three areas did Paul want the Ephesians to increase in their understanding?

Q. What similarity do you see between 1:19 and 6:10?

There is a power that works within us. It is the very same power that raised Jesus Christ from the dead (Eph 1:20). This is what Paul calls “the power of his might” or “his mighty power”.


📖 Eph 1:20-21. **Q.** According to this passage, where did God place Christ after his resurrection? Above what?

All principality, and power, and might, and dominion speaks of all the spiritual host, both angelic and demonic (Luke 10:17, Col 1:16-17).


Q. According to Eph 1:22, what relationship does Christ have to all of these things?

Jesus Christ is Lord of all. Including all of the spiritual world. He is Lord by virtue of creation (Col 1:16-17) and his subsequent redemption of creation (Rom 8:19-23). As such, all of the demonic forces in this world are


subject to him (Eph 1:22). We too can have victory over Satan and his attacks *through the power of Christ*. This is the power, in the form of the Holy Spirit, which Paul encourages us to “be strong in” (see also Eph 3:20-21).

 **Discuss.** *Can you think of some things that happened during Jesus’ earthly ministry that illustrated his power of the demonic realm?*

Our Enemy – The Devil

 1 Peter 5:8. **Q.** Who is our enemy? What does he desire to do? How should we respond?

We have a very powerful enemy called Satan. As scripture reveals, he was once a holy angel with an exalted position guarding the throne of God. Let’s look at some passages which describe his eventual fall.

 Ezekiel 28:11-19. This passage contains a dual prophecy and meaning. It had an immediate application to the king of Tyrus and his future demise. It also recounts the fall of Satan (who empowered the king of Tyrus) and describes his fall from heaven. **Q.** v12. How does this verse describe Satan?

Q. v13. Where had Satan been? _____.

Q. v13. How is his *covering* described?

Q. v13. What else was *prepared in him* when he was created?

Q. v14. He is described as the A_____ who was *upon the mountain of God*.

Q. v15. How is his original creation described? What was found in him?


Q. v16. How did God respond to Satan’s sin?


Q. v16. What did God say he *would do* to Satan?


Q. v17. For what reason was Satan “lifted up” and “corrupted”?

Q. v18. How is Satan’s final demise described?

Satan as originally created was a beautiful angel. He had an exalted position as a “covering cherub”. He stood before the throne of God and was involved somehow in Heaven’s worship music (v13). Satan became lifted up with pride because of his beauty, wisdom and lofty position. This pride caused him to lead a rebellion against God. His desire was to usurp God’s position as sovereign of the universe (Isaiah 14:13-14).


 **Discuss.** *Satan fell because of his pride. In what areas of our society do we see Satan’s prideful influence?*


 Rev 12:7-12. Because of Lucifer’s sin, God had Michael the archangel cast him from Heaven. **Q.** Heaven rejoiced to see Satan cast out. But a *woe* was pronounced upon the earth. Why should the inhabitants of the earth grieve? Why does Satan have great wrath?

 **Discuss.** *In 2 Thess 2:3-4 we see a description of the coming antichrist. He will be the embodiment of satanic power. What does the description of him in this passage tell us about the character and desire of Satan? In what areas do we see his desire played out in our society?*

Our Environment – Surrounded by an Angelic host

Satan has now been cast to the earth. This world is the domain in which he exercises his influence and power. But it is not only Satan that we face, when he fell from heaven, he did not go alone:

 Rev 12:3-4. This passage is referring figuratively to Satan as a *dragon* (v9). **Q.** According to verse 4, What did the dragon do when he was cast from heaven?

 Rev 12:9. Verse 9 in this passage gives us a little more detail. Who was cast out *with* Satan?

When Satan was cast out of heaven he brought one-third of all the angels with him. These are those whom he compelled to join him in his attempted usurpation against God the Father. It is interesting to note that scripture refers to these angels as “his angels”. This is an angelic host over whom Satan is chief (Luke 11:15).

Hebrews 12:22 indicates that angels are innumerable. Even one-third of this angelic host remains an incomprehensible number. All of these have joined Satan in his attack against God and God’s people. These angels are now on earth actively opposing all that is God’s.

📖 In Matt 8:16 we see a glimpse of the activity of Satan and his demonic angels throughout the ministry of Jesus Christ. **Q.** How did Christ deal with these devils? What does this verse indicate about the number of those who were possessed of devils?

There is a spiritual battle taking place all around us involving God’s heavenly angelic host and Satan’s demonic angels. We cannot see or feel it, but we should not be deceived into thinking the battle does not exist. Satan does not have the power to defeat God so his focus has turned from God, to those whom God loves. Christians are Satan’s target and the objects over which angels and demons continually battle. If the Devil cannot defeat God, he will try to defeat those whom God loves.

📖 2 Kings 6:13-18. In this passage we find the King of Syria seeking to capture Elisha the man of God. The King sent a great army to surround the place where Elisha dwelt. **Q.** According to verse 16, How did Elisha respond to his young servant?

Q. v17. What did Elisha pray for the young man?

Q. v17. God answered Elisha’s prayer. What did the young man see when God opened his eyes?

Q. v17-18. Judging by the description of this host and the way in which they defeated the Syrian army, Who (or what) do you think they were?


Notice that Elisha did not pray that God would *send* this host of fiery chariots. He only prayed that the young man would be able to see the host *that was already there*. Like Elisha, we have a heavenly host of angels around us at all times. We see this illustrated again in Joshua 5:13-15 where Joshua meets “the captain of the Lord’s host”, an angelic being who was leading God’s angelic army against Israel’s foes.

God sends angels to minister to his people. We may not see them, but the fact remains, they are active and at work around us at all times.


📖 Heb 1:13-14. **Q.** What role do God’s angels play? For whom?

It is reassuring to know that God has an innumerable host of angels ministering to us. It can be equally troubling at times to realize that Satan too has a host of demonic beings out to damn us.

Our Enemy – A Great Demonic Host


 Eph 6:12. **Q.** What do we *wrestle against*?

The words used to describe the demonic forces in this verse speak of *rank* or *orders* (see also Eph 1:21; 3:10; Rom 8:38; Col 2:15; 1 Pet 3:22). Demons are organized. They are a militant force led by Satan himself.

 Mark 5:1-13. In this passage we see an account of Jesus’ encounter with Satan’s demonic host. **Q.** According to verse 9, how did this demon respond when Jesus asked his name?

Q. v13. Jesus permitted these demons to be cast into a herd of swine. How many were there? _____

There is an enormous number of demons (or as the KJV says “devils”), whose sole purpose is to attack God’s people on a spiritual level. Daniel experienced this first-hand in Daniel chapter 10:


 Daniel 10:2-13. **Q.** For how long had Daniel been “mourning” (praying)?

Q. In the verses following we read a description of an angel who appeared to Daniel. According to verse 12, when was Daniel’s prayer heard?

Q. Why was the coming of the angel delayed?


Q. Judging by the fact that this is an angel speaking to Daniel, and the fact that Michael the archangel had to intervene, who do you think the “prince of the kingdom of Persia” might have been?

There was a spiritual battle taking place which Daniel was oblivious to. His prayer was heard by God the moment he had prayed it. Yet the answer was delayed due to a struggle between one of God’s angelic host and one of Satan’s demonic minions. This, along with the experiences of Elisha, Joshua and Jesus, is a glimpse into the spiritual realm where a battle between good and evil, angels and demons is continually waged.

 **Discuss.** *How should the reality of the demonic world affect the way we view things such as psychics, séances, ghosts and the “paranormal”?*

This World – Satan’s Domain

Remember in Revelation 12:12 where the fall of Satan is recounted. The angel pronounced a *woe* upon the inhabitants of the earth because Satan had been cast down to earth. The Bible refers to Satan as *the prince of the power of the air, the god of this world, and the prince of this world*. Today's world system is, without a doubt, the Devil's domain.

 1 John 2:15-16. **Q.** What attitude are we *not* to have toward this world? What do we know about the person who *does* love this world?

Q. v16. How can *all that is in this world* be summarized?


Q. v16. What relationship does God the Father have toward this world system?

The term *world* in this sense is not referring to the physical earth but the *world system*. The philosophies, standards, and morals of today's society are all a part of this world system. Satan runs rampant in this world and has exercised great influence over what this world values and promotes and what it despises and rejects. He is not omnipresent, nor does he need to be. He has set up this world system in such a way that it is a self-sufficient engine of immorality continually promoting his agenda and rejecting all that is godly.

The angel in Revelation 12 went on to say that Satan's wrath was *great* because he knows his time is short. Satan, knowing his demise is fast approaching, continues to exercise his wrath toward God and God's people. He prowls about this world looking for every opportunity to attack God's people (1 Peter 5:8). He uses many methods to hurt and hinder God's people. The Bible calls these sinister tactics "*the wiles of the devil*" (Eph 6:11).


The Wiles of the Devil – His Devious Methods

Satan has many devices that he employs in his war against God, but chief among these is the *perversion of God's truth*.

 John 8:44. **Q.** What did Satan not abide in? _____


Q. What is Satan the *father of*? _____

When we are first introduced to Satan in Genesis 3, he was already busy distorting God's truth. He began by questioning God's word (Gen 3:1). He continued by discrediting God's word (Gen 3:2) and finally he attacked the character of God himself (Gen 3:5). He continues this very same tactic today. He leads this world to question the veracity of the word of God, to actively seek ways to discredit it and to blaspheme God himself.


 **Discuss.** *In what ways might Satan accomplish the things mentioned above?*

Satan's lying distortion of truth comes in many different forms, including *false religion*:

False Religion

 Look again at John 8:44. In this passage, Jesus rebuked the Jews and (what had become) their false religion. **Q.** According to Christ, whose children were they?

Jesus was speaking to the religious elites of his day when he made this shocking statement. The Jews religion began as a legitimate, God-honouring religion. But through the process of time it became distorted and perverted. The truth of God was replaced with the commandments of men and true heart worship was replaced with cold, godless legalism (Matt 15:7-9). According to John 8:44, Satan is the *father* of this false religion.

 Matt 23:15. **Q.** According to Christ, where was one headed who became a proselyte (convert, or disciple) of the scribes and Pharisees?


Like most false religions, Judaism in Christ's day had begun with an element of truth. Satan used a measure of the truth to seduce and entice people to embrace what was, in actuality, a satanic ploy to send them to Hell.

False religions and cults are a powerful tool of Satan. As long as man feels "religious" and his conscience is satisfied he will feel no need to search for the truth. He has been lulled into believing that his soul is safe and stands against any notion to the contrary – including the genuine biblical gospel.

Often, Satan waits until the true gospel has been preached and then steps in to distort, pervert or discredit it. He does this in the form of cults, false religion and skeptics. This is the basis of Christ's parable of the soils in Matthew 13:3-23. Satan is the *wicked one* who snatches away the word when it is heard but not understood by an unbeliever (Matt 13:19).

Where false religions do not work, Satan is content to produce *false converts within* Christianity.


False Converts

 Matt 13:36-43. In Matt 13:24-30 Jesus tells a parable about a man who has planted wheat. While he slept an enemy came and sowed tares in the midst of the wheat. They looked so similar to the wheat it was hard to differentiate between the two. In Matt 13:36-43 he gives the interpretation of this parable.

Q. Who sowed the tares in the midst of the wheat? _____.

Q. What will happen to the tares? When will it occur?

In every church there are false converts. These are those who think they are Christians but are not (Matt 7:22,23; 1 John 2:19). Not only are these individuals duped into thinking they are going to Heaven, but they also satisfy Satan by causing discord and division in the church of God.


 **Discuss.** *Why do you think false converts in the church are such a valuable tool to Satan? What influence can they have?*

Spiritual Blindness

Where Satan is unable to persuade people to join him on the religious front, he is content to use other methods to blind them to the gospel message (2 Cor 4:3-4). Satan works in tandem with man and man's own depraved nature to devise godless philosophies which question, pervert or dismiss God's truth. Evolution, humanism and relativism are three such philosophies. By embracing these and philosophies like them, man can then justify his rejection of God and the gospel on the basis of his "education" or "enlightenment" (Ps 10:4; Eph 4:17-19). This sinful complacency results in spiritual blindness to the gospel message.


Temptation, Accusation and Doubt


When Satan fails to keep men from receiving Christ as their Lord and Saviour, he must resort to other methods still.


 1 Cor 9:27. **Q.** What was Paul afraid he would become if he did not keep his body under control?

Satan has no power to steal any of God's children, so his tactic here is to debilitate or render useless those who are already in the faith (Rom 8:38-39; 2 Cor 2:10-11). He weakens Christian's through temptation (1 Thess 3:5). He hinders their work for God (1 Thess 2:18), he leads them into false doctrine (2 Cor 2:11) and causes them to wallow in all the discouragement and doubt that accompanies these attacks.

The only thing better than a non-christian in Satan's eyes is an ineffective Christian! Consequently, he and his demonic hoard are relentless in their attacks against God's people. The good news is that God has not left us without instruction, nor has he left us without the power to obey those instructions.

 James 4:7. **Q.** What two things must we do in order for Satan to flee from us?

 **Discuss.** Eph 4:26-27 tells us not to "give place to the devil". How can we apply this practically?

 **Discuss.** 1 Peter 5:8. **Q.** What do you think it means to be "sober" and "vigilant" in regards to Satan's attacks?

God has provided all the means and power to overcome our spiritual enemy. It is up to us to educate ourselves regarding our enemy and to implement our weapons.

📖 1 Cor 10:3-5. **Q.** What are our weapons *not*? _____.

Q. If our weapons are not carnal (or fleshly), what are they?

📖 Eph 6:10-13. **Q.** v10. What will enable us to stand against the wiles of the devil?

Q. List all the pieces of spiritual armour found in Eph 6:10-18.

We don't have to be alarmed over Satan's attacks, but we *do* need to be armed! We have the ability to overcome the devil and his demons by the power of God that works within us (Eph 1:19-20, 6:10). The armour of God listed in Ephesians 6 is the means by which we exercise this power.

In coming studies we will explore each piece of armour in detail and discover how we can emerge from this spiritual battle as victors over the *wiles of the devil*.

Review

1. What does 1 Corinthians 10:12 teach us about who might face Satan's attacks. How can we obey the exhortation in this verse?

2. In the Old Testament we see the names of king of Tyrus and Satan used interchangeably, why do you think this is so? Where else in scripture is this done?

3. Do you think man ever taps into the demonic realm? How might he invite demonic attack?

4. 2 Cor 11:14-15 tells us that Satan is, at times, transformed into an angel of light. What do you think this means? How does he do this in our society?

5. What methods might Satan use to cause problems in a church?