

SPIRITUAL WARFARE

Defeating Satan's Scheme Against the Church

Key verse: (Romans 8:37) *Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.*

As we become born-again believers in Christ, we enter into the blessing of the Lord. We also become aware of the spiritual warfare that is around us. We do not enter into spiritual battles when we become a born-again Christian, because Satan attacks all people, believers and non-believers. But when we become a believer, we become more aware of the attacks of Satan. As we study the Word of God, we find the spiritual armor that God has for us, equipping us to do battle so that we become more than conquerors through Christ. In this lesson, we will study the works of Satan so that we know his scheme and attacks against us and against the church. We will also study to know how to be more than conquerors through Christ.

Ephesians 6:10-18 is perhaps the clearest definition of the spiritual war which we find. It not only assures us that there is a spiritual war, but it warns us that apart from utilizing the weapons which God has provided for us, we are hopelessly underpowered. This passage informs us as to what our divine weapons are. Beyond this, these weapons imply the nature of the struggle which we are in. The weapons which God has provided for us are those weapons which best repel the attacks of Satan, and thus we can learn a great deal about the nature of Satan's opposition from simply considering each of the weapons at our disposal.

Understanding Satan's Scheme

There are spiritual attacks against the believers and against the non-believers. In this lesson we will be dealing with the spiritual attacks against the church, the believers.

Spiritual warfare began long ago in heaven when Lucifer rebelled against God. (Isaiah 14:12-14) *How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! (13) For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: (14) I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High.*

Lucifer possessed great beauty, power, and authority, but he had to have more. He wanted to exalt himself further; he wanted to become like God. Not only did Lucifer/Satan bring one-third of the angels into his rebellion, but we also see him bringing man into his rebellion. Satan's scheme is to bring as many into his rebellion as possible. (Genesis 3:1-5) *Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? (2) And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: (3) But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die. (4) And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: (5) For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.*

We see Satan putting pride in the heart of King David, causing him to sin against God. (1 Chronicles 21:1-7, GW) *Satan attempted to attack Israel by provoking David to count the Israelites. (2) David said to Joab and the leaders of the people, "Go, count Israel from Beersheba to Dan. Bring me [the results] so that I may know how many [people] there are." (3) Joab responded, "May the LORD multiply his people a hundred times over. But, Your Majesty, aren't they all your servants? Why are you trying to do this? Why do you wish*

to make Israel guilty of [this] sin?" (4) However, the king overruled Joab. So Joab left, went throughout Israel, and returned to Jerusalem. (5) Joab reported the census figures to David: In Israel there were 1,100,000 men who could serve in the army, and in Judah there were 470,000 who could serve in the army. (6) Joab didn't include Levi and Benjamin in the number because he was disgusted with the king's order. (7) God considered the census to be sinful, so he struck Israel [with a plague].

Numbering the people, one would think, was no bad thing. Why should not the shepherd know the number of his flock? But God sees not as man sees. It is plain it was wrong in David to do it, and a great aggravation to God, because he did it in the pride of his heart; and there is no sin that has in it more of contradiction and therefore more of offense to God than pride.

In Acts chapter 5 we read of Ananias and his wife Sapphira, who had given a certain amount of money to the work of the Lord, but who had lied about the amount. When Peter rebuked Ananias for his deception, he attributed the source of the lie to Satan: (Acts 5:3) *Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit, and to keep back some of the price of the land?*

Satan does not want us to forgive others, because he does not want us to receive forgiveness. (2 Corinthians 2:10-11, GW) *If you forgive someone, so do I. Indeed, what I have forgiven, if I have forgiven anything, I did in the presence of Christ for your benefit. (11) I don't want Satan to outwit us. After all, we are not ignorant about Satan's scheming.*

One thing the devil does is blind the eyes of people so they will not see the Truth. (2 Corinthians 4:4) *In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.*

Gossiping and vulgar language is allowing Satan to use our tongue. Satan does not possess our tongue, we willingly speak these things. It is Satan's scheme to destroy the church. Gossiping is the devil is using the church to destroy the church. (1 Timothy 5:12-15) *Having damnation, because they have cast off their first faith. (13) And withal they learn to be idle, wandering about from house to house; and not only idle, but tattlers also and busybodies, speaking things which they ought not. (14) I will therefore that the younger women marry, bear children, guide the house, give none occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully. (15) For some are already turned aside after Satan.*

We are not to use vulgar language. (James 3:10) *Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not so to be.*

James condemns fighting and strife in the church. Then in verse seven James says that if you resist the devil, then he will flee from you. Here we see that strife is the work of the devil, and we must resist it. (James 4:1-4, GW) *What causes fights and quarrels among you? Aren't they caused by the selfish desires that fight to control you? (2) You want what you don't have, so you commit murder. You're determined to have things, but you can't get what you want. You quarrel and fight. You don't have the things you want, because you don't pray for them. (3) When you pray for things, you don't get them because you want them for the wrong reason--for your own pleasure. (4) You unfaithful people! Don't you know that love for this [evil] world is hatred toward God? Whoever wants to be a friend of this world is an enemy of God.*

The works of the devil are: pride, rebellion, lies, deception, unforgiving spirit, gossip, and strife in the church. Satan plants these in the hearts of believers so that the believers will war against each other. Satan also blinds people's minds so they do not see or understand Truth. Truth is what sets us free, and Satan does not want us to be delivered.

Ephesians 6:10-13

In verses Ephesians 6:10-13 we look at the war we have and the scope of its seriousness. (Ephesians 6:10-13) Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. (11) Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. (12) For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high *places*. (13) Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

Ephesians 6:10 - As Christians soldiers, we must be properly armed. We are to be strong in our determination to fight the good fight of faith. (1 Timothy 6:12) Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses.

Ephesians 6:11 - We are to put on the things of God, because this is our defense against the attacks and schemes of the devil.

Ephesians 6:12 - We are not fighting humans, but celestial beings. There are different ranks of these celestial beings. They have a government and they are organized. Therefore, we too must be an organized church, spiritually equipped in the things of God.

Angelic beings were created with great powers. They are not all powerful as God is, but as celestial beings, they have great power. This would also include those that fell with Lucifer. We should be careful not to underestimate their powers. Even the angels are careful when they bring accusations against demons. (2 Peter 2:9-12, GW) Since the Lord did all this, he knows how to rescue godly people when they are tested. He also knows how to hold immoral people for punishment on the day of judgment. (10) This is especially true of those who follow their corrupt nature along the path of impure desires and who despise the Lord's authority. These false teachers are bold and arrogant. They aren't afraid to insult the [Lord's] glory. (11) Angels, who have more strength and power than these teachers, don't bring an insulting judgment against them from the Lord. (12) These false teachers insult what they don't understand. They are like animals, which are creatures of instinct that are born to be caught and killed. So they will be destroyed like animals.

In another translation, (2 Peter 2:11, BBE) Though the angels, who are greater in strength and power, do not make use of violent language against them before the Lord. In these Scriptures it tells us that godly people are not delivered *from* temptation, but *in* temptation. In other words, the righteous will go through temptations, but God is with us and will keep us. These Scriptures also talk about false teachers who have no respect for anyone or anything. These teachers are bold and arrogant, and they teach about spiritual things that they themselves do not understand. The holy angels, who are represented as bringing an account of the actions of the fallen angels before the Lord in judgment, simply state the facts without exaggeration, and without permitting any thing of a bitter, reviling, or railing spirit, to enter into their accusations. On the contrary, there are false teachers who speak evil of dignities, who wish to be under no control, and they act as if they will not be judged for their unrighteous deeds.

We see in Jude how an archangel deals with Satan. (Jude 8-10) Likewise also these *filthy* dreamers defile the flesh, despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities. (9) Yet Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee. (10) But these speak evil of those things which they know not: but what they know naturally, as brute beasts, in those things they corrupt themselves. When the archangel Michael had a disput against Satan, Michael did not use violent language against him, Michael just said. "The Lord rebuke you." In another translation is states, "May the Lord be your judge." Again, the Scriptures talk

about false teachers who teach on things that they do not understand. These teachers with their disrespectful attitudes are going to be judged for their unrighteousness.

Ephesians 6:13 - We must stand our ground, not yielding to the devil and his scheme. We must stand armed in the things of God. (Romans 13:12) *The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light.* We take off the works of darkness and put on the works of light which are the works of righteousness, (2 Corinthians 6:7) *By the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the left.*

Understanding Our Weapons

In spiritual warfare, Satan deceives unbelievers so they will not see the truth. And Satan comes against the church so that believers will stop believing the truth. As believers we know that there is a spiritual warfare, and we know where to get the armor to protect ourselves, and do battle against our adversary. When we put on the whole armor of God, we are putting on Christ. (Romans 13:11-14) *And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. (12) The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light. (13) Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. (14) But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.*

In Ephesians 6:11 we see that our duty is not to attack Satan, or to defeat him, but rather to withstand his attacks. Our task is defensive, not offensive. It is not we who will defeat Satan, but Christ. Our duty is to resist Satan, and God gives us the power to do that.

We are to stand (in effect, to stand still), because God is the One who wins the battle. In the Book of Revelation the saints who are “over-comers” do not defeat Satan. Satan’s final defeat (20:7-10) comes not at the hand of the saints, but from the hand of God, who sends fire from heaven (20:9). In spiritual warfare the battle is the Lord’s. When the Christian is actively engaged in the battle, it is the Lord who wins the victory (see Joshua 5:13–6:27). When David fought Goliath, he did not even have a sword, but only a sling. While David fought, it was the Lord who gave the victory. Even Goliath’s words to David made it clear that this young man could not prevail on his own. And David’s words made it clear that the battle, and the victory was the Lord’s.

Satan’s defeat and our defense is spoken of in the Gospel. Jesus spoke of Satan’s defeat a number of times in the Gospels. In every instance, Satan’s defeat is viewed as accomplished at the cross of Calvary. Our salvation and Satan’s defeat has already been accomplished by our Lord, when Christ died on the cross of Calvary and then rose from the dead, triumphing over His foes, foremost of whom is Satan himself. The Christian’s defenses are also directly tied to the Gospel. They are **truth, righteousness, the preparation of the gospel of peace, the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation, the Word of God, and praying in the Spirit**. Our deliverance from Satan’s power and our defense from his attacks are found in Christ and in the Gospel which Christ’s death and resurrection have made a reality.

(Ephesians 6:14-18) *Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; (15) And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; (16) Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. (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, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints.*

Truth - The truth will set us free. One way that Satan attacks is with lies. We must know the truth and speak the truth. Eve was fooled with a lie. The devil is the father of lies, John 8:44, so we need Truth to defend ourselves against Satan's schemes and attacks.

(Psalm 15:2) He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart.

(John 4:24) God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship *him* in spirit and in truth.

(John 8:32) And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

Righteousness - Applying holy principles to our life. Living by the Word of God. Satan's scheme in our life is to lead us in an ungodly life. We are to cast off the works of Satan and put on godliness.

(Genesis 15:6) And he believed in the Lord; and he counted it to him for righteousness.

(Deuteronomy 6:25) And it shall be our righteousness, if we observe to do all these commandments before the Lord our God, as he hath commanded us.

(Romans 13:12) The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light.

Gospel of Peace - The Gospel of Peace is the Gospel of Christ, which is the Gospel of God's Grace to us. God's grace brings power, salvation, deliverance, and miracles. When the Gospel was preached in the Book of Acts, the people who gladly received the Word were healed, delivered, and saved. The Gospel in our life is the Grace and Power of God in our life to make us more than conquerors against Satan's attack.

(Acts 20:24) But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God.

(Romans 1:16) For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.

Faith - Our lives must be one that pleases God. God's ways are different than our ways and higher than our ways. We may not understand His ways, but when we submit to His ways, then God's power and authority is on us. God takes pleasure with us when we, in faith, obey His Word. Faith with the proper actions equals God's favor and power with us. Satan will put doubt in our hearts so that we will not do those things that please God. To counter this attack, we live by faith in God.

(Proverbs 3:5) Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding.

(Hebrews 10:38) Now the just shall live by faith: but if *any man* draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him.

(James 2:20-23) But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead? (21) Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? (22) Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect? (23) And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God.

Salvation - As we apply the Gospel to our lives, we are receiving salvation from our sins. If we are not cleansed from our sins then Satan still has a hold on our life.

(Acts 2:38) Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

(Acts 3:19) Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord.

(Acts 22:16) And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.

Word of God - The Word of God must be alive in our lives. *For the word of God is quick, and powerful*]. Commentators are divided concerning the meaning of the phrase “*the word of God*”; some supposing the whole of *Divine revelation* to be intended; others, *the doctrine of the Gospel faithfully preached*; others, the *mind of God* or the *Divine intellect*. I believe that the Word of God is all of these. God’s Word is divinely revealed to us. This Word is the mind of God for us. We are to be faithful to God’s Word, applying it to our life. Then we receive the power of God released in our lives, and we are more than conquerors against Satan’s attack. When Satan tempted Christ, Jesus defeated Satan every time by quoting the Scriptures. There is power in the Word of God. When Satan tempted Eve, he took the Word of God, and then changed it. We are to know the Word of God and not allow Satan to deceive us by twisting or changing the Word of God.

(Hebrews 4:12) *For the word of God is quick (alive), and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.*

(Matthew 4:4) *But he (Jesus) answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.*

(John 8:32) *And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.*

Praying in the Spirit - We must understand that one who prays receives strength, help, and guidance from the Lord. If we do not pray, then we cannot receive any of these from the Lord. That is why the devil does not want us to be a people of prayer. And when we feel to pray but do not know what to pray, then we are to pray in the Spirit, because the Spirit knows all things and will help us in our prayers. (Romans 8:26-27) *Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. (27) And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.*

Now we have a greater understanding into Satan’s schemes and attacks against us and the church. We now know what weapons we receive from God, and how to utilize them to our life so that we become more than conquerors through Jesus Christ which gives us all strength. These weapons in our life gives us God’s authority, power, and grace in our life.

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