

## SPIRITUAL WARFARE, PT. 1; EPH. 6:10-13 (Ed O'Leary)

### INTRODUCTION.

TODAY, ~ WE BEGIN THE THIRD AND FINAL OVERARCHING THEME OF EPHESIANS, ~ the topic of spiritual warfare, ~ which takes up 6:10-20.

▶▶ It is an inescapable fact of the Christian life that we believers are engaged in a war.

▶▶ We are soldiers.

▷▷ As we know, ~ our brother Steve preached . . . .

▷▷ In 2 Tim. 2:3, ~ Paul told Timothy, ~ "Share in suffering as a good soldier of Christ Jesus."

▶▶ My fellow believers, ~ make no mistake, ~ we are soldiers engaged in a war.

▶▶ But the war we find ourselves in ~ is not a physical war ~ but a spiritual war, ~ against spiritual enemies.

▷▷ As Paul says in 2 Cor. 10:3, ~ "For though we walk in the flesh, we are not waging war according to the flesh."

▷▷ But let's take note, ~ our spiritual enemies and this spiritual war are no less real or less dangerous than physical enemies and physical war.

▶▶ My brothers and sisters in Christ, ~ we are soldiers, ~ engaged in spiritual warfare, ~ against spiritual enemies, ~ whose objective is to destroy us.

▷▷ 1 Pet. 5:8, ~ "Be sober-minded; ~ be watchful. ~ Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, ~ seeking someone to devour ~ [i.e., ~ to totally destroy]" . . .

▶▶ But there is no need for us to be afraid or to throw our hands up in surrender.

▷▷ Because our great God has provided resources that will enable us to stand strong in battle and to be victorious when the enemy attacks us.

↪↪ And that's what Paul spells out for us in Eph. 6:10-20. ~ This a.m., ~ 10-13

IN VERSE 10a, ~ THE WORD "FINALLY" SIGNALS THAT PAUL IS MOVING INTO HIS final overarching theme. ↪↪ 1/8

▶▶ So this means that *verse 10b*, ~ "be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might," ~ ¶¶

▷▷ belongs to this third overarching theme and has a specific meaning within that context.

HOWEVER, ~ AS A GENERAL STATEMENT, ~ "BE STRONG IN THE LORD AND IN THE strength of his might" can be applied to all of the second overarching theme, ~ 4:1 - 6:9.

▶▶ Because to carry out Paul's exhortations found within that second overarching theme, ~ we need to "be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might."

▷▷ I.e., ~ we need divine empowerment to carry them out. ~ But dealing in context . . .

### NOW LET'S LOOK AT VERSES 10b-11a.

<sup>10b</sup> "Be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might ~ [or, ~ in his mighty power]. ~ <sup>11a</sup> Put on the whole armor of God."

I WOULD LIKE US TO NOTICE TWO THINGS. ~ AND WE NEED TO UNDERSTAND THIS in order to get Paul's messages to us in verses 10b and 11a w/in context of sp. warfare.

▶▶ 1<sup>st</sup>, ~ notice there is no conjunction connecting *verse 11a* with *verse 10b*, ~ signaling that they stand alone.

▷▷ No explicit instructions about how the two verses fit together.

↪↪ E.g., ~ there are no connections showing *verse 11a* results from *verse 10b* ~ or that *verse 11a* explains how we are to be strong in the Lord.

▶▶ Here's the second thing I'd like us to notice. ~ When we examine *verses 10b and 11a* carefully, ~ I believe a couple of parallels are evident.

▷▷ E.g., ~ "be strong" ↔ "Put on."

▷▷ "in the Lord and in the strength of his might" ↔ "the whole armor of God."

▶▶ I would suggest that this tells us that *verses 10b and 11a* are parallel commands.

▷▷ IOW, ~ they are saying the same thing in different words.

▶▶ And since the rest of the passage focuses on putting on "the whole armor of God," ~ that's the key command. ¶¶ 2/8

▷▷ Specifically, ~ that means **verse 10b**, ~ using different words, ~ is saying "Put on the whole armor of God."

▶▶ But **verse 10b** carries a strong implication as well.

▷▷ The mention of God's mighty power strongly indicates that God's matchless power will be working ~ in us ~ and through us ~ and for us ~ **when we are clothed in the full armor of God.**

### BUT WHY DID PAUL DO THIS? ~~ WHY SAY SAME THING TWICE USING DIFF. WORDS?

▶▶ He could have easily begun his discussion on spiritual warfare by simply saying "Put on the whole armor of God."

▶▶ Well, ~ in saying the same thing twice using different words, ~ I believe Paul is sending us, ~ believers, ~ three loud and clear messages.

▶▶ The 1<sup>st</sup> loud and clear message that Paul is sending us is that believers need God's resources to fight in this spiritual war.

▷▷ IOW, ~ we can't fight this fight w/ our own resources or in our own strength.

▶▶ 2<sup>nd</sup>, ~ in saying the same thing twice using different words, ~ Paul is sending the loud and clear message that putting on "the whole armor of God" ~ **is of the utmost importance for a believer.**

▶▶ And 3<sup>rd</sup>, ~ Paul is sending the loud and clear message that believers are to take this matter absolutely seriously.

### NOW LET'S LOOK AT PAUL'S KEY COMMAND IN VERSE 11a.

#### "PUT ON THE WHOLE ARMOR OF GOD."

▶▶ Notice word "whole." ~~ We're not to just put on some of the pieces of the armor of God.

▶▶ "The whole armor of God" means the armor that God provides.

▷▷ So it can be paraphrased as, ~ "Put on all the armor that God has given you."

↪↪ Notice, ~ give ~~ but we're responsible . . . .

▶▶ And since we do not wage "war according to the flesh," ~ this armor is not physical but spiritual. **↵↵ 3/8**

▶▶ Also, ~ consider this.

▷▷ Since God has given us this spiritual armor, ~ we can be 100% guaranteed that it is very strong spiritual armor.

↳↳ Strong enough . . . .

*IN VERSE 11b, ~ PAUL GIVES US A REASON WHY WE NEED TO PUT ON ALL OF THE very strong spiritual armor that God has given us.*

"THAT YOU MAY BE ABLE TO STAND AGAINST THE SCHEMES OF THE DEVIL."

THE GREEK WORD FOR "TO STAND" MEANS "TO STAND" OR "TO OFFER RESISTANCE to."

▶▶ The one who stands is not pushed around ~ but firmly holds his or her position.

▷▷ In terms of warfare, ~ it does not mean an offensive, ~ but rather a defensive stance.

↳↳ I.e., ~ to hold one's ground, ~ to hold one's position.

PAUL EXHORTS BELIEVERS TO PUT ON THE WHOLE ARMOR THAT GOD SUPPLIES.

▶▶ Because it will enable us to successfully hold our position against Satan's schemes ~ and not fall into sin or become ineffective in our witness for Christ.

▶▶ "the schemes of the devil" refers to the strategies Satan uses to wage war against the believer.

▷▷ As we'll see, ~ in [verse 16](#), ~ Paul calls them "flaming darts."

▷▷ And all of Satan's strategies against believers have one goal, ~ to deceive and destroy us.

↳↳ We've already mentioned [1 Pet. 5:8](#) . . . .

↳↳ And Satan would fit the category of the thief that Jesus mentions in [Jn. 10:10a](#).

→→ "The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy."

▷▷ In [2 Cor. 11:14](#), ~ Paul makes note of one of Satan's strategies: ~ "Satan disguises himself as an angel of light."

↳↳ Not through front door & announce . . . . ↯ 4/8

▶▶Consequently, ~ Paul exhorts believers to put on all of the strong spiritual armor that God has given us, ~ ¶¶

▷▷for the purpose of being able to successfully hold our position against Satan's strategies and not surrender to them.

▶▶Without putting on every piece of this armor that God has given us, ~ ¶¶

▷▷it is certain that we will not be able to successfully hold our position against, ~ and will be deceived and defeated by, ~ "the schemes of the devil", ~ ¶¶

↳↳which have been effective for thousands of years . . . .

IN VERSE 12, ~ PAUL GIVES BELIEVERS A SECOND REASON WHY WE NEED TO PUT on the whole armor that God has given us.

IT'S BECAUSE ~ "WE DO NOT WRESTLE AGAINST FLESH AND BLOOD, ~ ¶¶

▶▶but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places."

▶▶"the heavenly places" = the unseen world around us.

▶▶My brothers and sisters in Christ, ~ our fight is **not** against **human** enemies, ~ ¶¶

▷▷but against powerful and evil **supernatural** enemies.

▶▶Though unbelievers and this evil world may appear to be the chief enemies of God and His church, ~ Paul indicates that our fight is not really against them.

▷▷Rather it is against the evil spiritual forces who control unbelievers and this evil world.

↳↳1 Jn. 5:19b, ~ NIV ~ "the whole world is under the control of the evil one."

↳↳And in 2 Tim. 2:26, ~ Satan has captured unbelievers to do his will.

BACK TO VERSE 12.

▶▶We fight "against the rulers, ~ against the authorities, ~ against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, ~ against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places."

▷▷The four terms that Paul uses in [verse 12](#) for demons are most likely synonyms.

▶▶ So why does Paul line up these four terms rather than just simply say, ~ "we fight against evil spirits or demons"?

▷▷ For emphasis.

↳↳ He wants to wake us up to the fact that this present age is an age of darkness and evil, ~ controlled by powerful, ~ evil forces, ~ ¶¶

→→ who are intent on bringing about our downfall.

IN VERSE 13a, ~ PAUL STATES WHAT SHOULD RESULT FROM THE FACT THAT OUR fight is against "the spiritual forces of evil."

"THEREFORE," ~ I.E., ~ BECAUSE WE FIGHT AGAINST "THE SPIRITUAL FORCES OF evil," ~ "take up the whole armor of God."

▶▶ This is the third time Paul has told us to put on the strong spiritual armor that God has given us.

▷▷ This puts a triple emphasis on the need, ~ utmost importance, ~ and absolute seriousness of this matter.

IN VERSE 13b, ~ PAUL STATES THE PURPOSE FOR PUTTING ALL THE ARMOR ON.

"THAT YOU MAY BE ABLE TO WITHSTAND ~ [I.E., ~ SO WE WILL BE ABLE TO successfully hold our position] ~ in ~ [or, ~ on] ~ the evil day."

▶▶ This phrase, ~ "the evil day" may throw us a bit.

▷▷ Because we would expect Paul to say "Put on the whole armor that God has given you in order to be able to withstand the spiritual forces of evil."

▷▷ But Paul is still talking about "the spiritual forces of evil" ~ and not introducing something that does not fit the context.

▷▷ Briefly put, ~ in all likelihood the phrase "the evil day" refers to any day when they attack us.

▶▶ Most likely then, ~ Paul is simply saying this, ~ beginning with verse 13a: ~ ~ ¶¶

▷▷ "Believers, ~ because we fight against the spiritual forces of evil, ~ put on every piece of the strong spiritual armor that God has given us, ~ so that we will be able to successfully hold our position on the day they attack." ¶¶ 6/8

▶▶ This of course would include times of intensified attacks.

▷▷ Days when the battle is extra fierce ~ when the enemy pulls out all of the stops ~ and hits us on all fronts at once.

↳↳ Job . . . . .

↳↳ Smyrna . . . . .

→→ Rev. 2:10a, ~ "Do not fear what you are about to suffer. ~ ~ ¶¶

↳↳ Behold, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and for ten days you will have tribulation."

▷▷ But even in those times, ~ ¶¶

↳↳ when we put on every piece of the strong spiritual armor that God has given us, ~ we will be able to successfully hold our position.

→→ As Job 2:10b says, ~ "In all this Job did not sin with his lips."

*THEN, ~ IN VERSE 13c, ~ USING A VERY BRIEF STATEMENT, ~ PAUL SUMS UP verses 10-13b.*

"AND HAVING DONE ALL, TO STAND FIRM."

▶▶ I.e., ~ in summary, ~ when we have put on every piece of the strong spiritual armor that God has given us, ~ we will be fully prepared for the battle ~ ¶¶

▷▷ and be enabled to successfully hold our position against Satan and his army of demons.

▶▶ My brothers and sisters in Christ, ~ we cannot hold our position against the enemy in our own armor, ~ in our own power, ~ in our own strength.

▷▷ As Zech. 4:6b declares, ~ "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, says the Lord of hosts."

↳↳ It is only by the power of the Holy Spirit ~ and using all of the resources He has given us ~ that we can hold our position against, ~ ¶¶

→→ and not fall before, ~ "the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places."

## CONCLUSION.

IN CLOSING, ~ WE SHOULD NOTE THE FOLLOWING.

▶▶ Since our God has given us these resources, ~ and it is His matchless power working in us and through us and for us, ~ He gets the glory and the thanks for our victories.

▷▷ After our victories, ~ we, ~ like David in Ps. 18:39, ~ need to say to the Lord, ~ "For you equipped me with strength for the battle; you made those who rise against me sink under me."

↪↪ In heavenly armor we'll enter the land, the battle belongs to the lord. ~ ~ ↓↓

→→ No weapon that's fashion'd against us will stand, the battle belongs to the lord.

▶▶ To God be the glory for all the victories we've had and will have!!

LET'S PRAY . . . . 8/8