


# Spiritual Warfare (Ephesians 6:10-20)

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10 Finally, be strong in the Lord, and in the strength of His might. 11 Put on the full armor of God, that you may be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. 12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places. 13 Therefore, take up the full armor of God, that you may be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm.

14 Stand firm therefore, having girded your loins with truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, 15 and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; 16 in addition to all, taking up the shield of faith with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming missiles of the evil one. 17 And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. 18 With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints, 19 and pray on my behalf, that utterance may be given to me in the opening of my mouth, to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel, 20 for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in proclaiming it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.

## Introduction

As Hitler's appetite for power and territory grew, his army began to march across Europe. In some cases, the fight could hardly be called a battle. The German army advanced, with its tanks and with technologically advanced weapons. In some of the underdeveloped nations, their armies made a futile effort to resist Hitler's aggression, fighting back with spears and even rocks. It was no contest at all, because these nations were not equipped for the battle.

The same could be said of Satan, and those whom he opposes. Many of his victims do not even know there is a war going on. They make easy prey. Christians should know that we are in the midst of a great spiritual struggle, although many seem not to believe it. And even more distressing is the fact that many who consider themselves "in the war" do not understand the nature of Satan's schemes, of the weapons which he employs, or of the weapons which God has provided for our defense.

[Ephesians 6:10-20](#) is perhaps the clearest definition of the spiritual war which we find from the pen of the Apostle Paul. 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 divinely 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.

In this first lesson, we will concentrate on verses 10-13, which direct our attention to the war itself, and to our grasp of its gravity. After a consideration of the war in general, we will then proceed to examine in more detail each of the weapons Paul mentions, and the offensive strategy of Satan which they imply. May God give us open hearts and minds to understand the spiritual war, and the means which He has provided for our defense.

## The Spiritual War in the Old Testament

It should come as no surprise to the Christian to read here that we are engaged in a great spiritual battle. From the early chapters of the Old Testament it is apparent that Satan is the enemy of God, and that he actively seeks to oppose God, His purposes, and His people. Let us consider the evidence for the spiritual war in the Old Testament, and then to further pursue this matter in the New Testament.

We would probably turn first to the third chapter of the Book of Genesis to find Satan striking what appears to be the first blow of the spiritual war. Actually, the battle began long before the creation of Adam and Eve. Satan's rebellion against God is described in two Old Testament prophecies:

12 "How you have fallen from heaven, O star of the morning, son of the dawn! You have been cut down to the earth, You who have weakened the nations! 13 "But you said in your heart, 'I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God, And I will sit on the mount of assembly In the recesses of the north. 14 'I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High' ([Isa. 14:12-14](#)).

12 "Son of man, take up a lamentation over the king of Tyre, and say to him, 'Thus says the Lord GOD, "You had the seal of perfection, Full of wisdom and perfect in beauty. 13 "You were in Eden, the garden of God; Every precious stone was your covering: The ruby, the topaz, and the diamond; The beryl, the onyx, and the jasper; The lapis lazuli, the turquoise, and the emerald; And the gold, the workmanship of your settings and sockets, Was in you. On the day that you were created They were prepared. 14 "You were the anointed cherub who covers, And I placed you there. You were on the holy mountain of God; You walked in the midst of the stones of fire. 15 "You were blameless in your ways From the day you were created, Until unrighteousness was found in you ([Ezek. 28:12-15](#)).

It is clear from these verses that the prophets are not speaking only of an earthly ruler, but of someone possessing much greater power. They are speaking of none other than Satan. He was the angel who was created by God ([Ezekiel 28:13](#)), given the highest authority under God, but who was not content with this. He was the one who was in Eden, the garden of God ([Ezekiel 28:13](#)). He was once blameless at the time of his creation, but then was found with sin ([Ezekiel 28:15](#)). He possessed great beauty, power, and authority, but he had to have more. He wanted to exalt himself further; he wanted to become like God ([Isaiah 14:14](#)).

When Satan rebelled against God, others joined him in opposing God and His purposes. And so we find Satan making his first public appearance in Genesis chapter 3, not as Satan, but as a creature which God has made. Satan comes to Adam and Eve as a fellow-creature, under God's authority and that of the man and his wife. His temptation is heeded, and God's Word disobeyed, leading not only to the downfall of Adam and his wife, but of all their offspring.

In Genesis chapter 6, we are told that the "sons of God" took wives from among the "daughters of men." In the Old Testament the expression, "sons of God," is used of angels rather than in reference to men. It would therefore seem that Satan was seeking to employ fallen angels to corrupt the "seed of the woman" who was promised to defeat Satan and to bring about man's salvation from sin ([Genesis 3:15](#)).<sup>144</sup>

The events of the Book of Job are believed to have occurred in patriarchal times, and thus Satan's appearance in [Job 1](#) and 2 would have taken place after Genesis chapters 3 and 6. Satan was gathered around the throne of God, along with the other "sons of God" ([Job 1:6](#)). He contended that Job would only serve God as long as God blessed him. God then granted Satan the authority to afflict Job, but always within strict limits. In the case of Job's adversities, they came first from Satan, but ultimately from God, whose sovereign control over the events of His servant's life never wavered. An important thing to note here is not only that the suffering of Job, which appeared to be of very natural causes, was of satanic origins. Furthermore, we are led to see beyond the earthly drama to its more celestial purpose of instructing not only Satan, but all the "sons of God," to God's glory, if not to Satan's fuller grasp of the issues.

In 2 Kings chapter 6, the king of Syria was waging war against Israel. God informed Elisha the prophet of all the Syrian king's battle plans in advance, and the prophet conveyed them to the king of Israel, so that all of Syria's attacks were nullified. When the king of Syria learned that Elisha was the source of his troubles, he sent out his army to seize him. In the morning, the Syrian troops surrounded the city of Dothan, where Elisha was staying. When Elisha's servant arose early and went out, perhaps to draw water, he saw the Syrian army as it was surrounding the city. The panic-stricken servant rushed to his master and told him what he had seen.

While the servant was terrified by what he had seen, Elisha remained calm. He knew something that his servant did not. He knew that earthly armies were no threat when the host of heaven was on his side. And so he prayed that the eyes of his servant might be opened, to see the "invisible army" which was on duty to protect the people of God:

15 Now when the attendant of the man of God had risen early and gone out, behold, an army with horses and chariots was circling the city. And his servant said to him, "Alas, my master! What shall we do?" 16 So he answered, "Do not fear, for those who are with us are more than those who are with them." 17 Then Elisha prayed and said, "O LORD, I pray, open his eyes that he may see." And the LORD opened the servant's eyes, and he saw; and behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha. 18 And when they came down to him, Elisha prayed to the LORD and said, "Strike this people with blindness, I pray." So He struck them with blindness according to the word of Elisha. 19 Then Elisha said to them, "This is not the way, nor is this the city; follow me and I will bring you to the man whom you seek." And he brought them to Samaria ([2 Kings 6:15-19](#)).

This heavenly army descended to Elisha, who prayed that they might strike the enemy with blindness. As a result, Elisha was able, singlehandedly, to lead the entire Syrian army into the hands of the Israelite army's hand. He would not allow them to be killed, but instead sent them all home after giving them food and water. The heavenly army is ever-present, and it responds to the prayers of the saints.

In 1 Chronicles, we see another glimpse of Satan's opposition to God and to His people. A glimpse which is not mentioned in the parallel account in 2 Samuel chapter 24: "Then Satan stood up against Israel and moved David to number Israel" ([1 Chr. 21:1](#)). Unless we had been given the revelation of this verse, no one would ever have attributed David's actions here to anything other than bad judgment. But behind his foolish and sinful decision we find Satan, ever seeking to oppose God through His people.

Finally, in the Book of Daniel we come to one of the most dramatic examples of the spiritual warfare:

24 Then Nebuchadnezzar the king was astounded and stood up in haste; he responded and said to his high officials, "Was it not three men we cast bound into the midst of the fire?" They answered and said to the king, "Certainly, O king." 25 He answered and said, "Look! I see four men loosed and walking about in the midst of the fire without harm, and the appearance of the fourth is like a son of the gods!" ([Daniel 3:24-25](#)).

10 Then behold, a hand touched me and set me trembling on my hands and knees. 11 And he said to me, "O Daniel, man of high esteem, understand the words that I am about to tell you and stand upright, for I have now been sent to you." And when he had spoken this word to me, I stood up trembling. 12 Then he said to me, "Do not be afraid, Daniel, for from the first day that you set your heart on understanding this and on humbling yourself before your God, your words were heard, and I have come in response to your words. 13 "But the prince of the kingdom of Persia was withstanding me for twenty-one days; then behold, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, for I had been left there with the kings of Persia.... 20 Then he said, "Do you understand why I came to you? But I shall now return to fight against the prince of Persia; so I am going forth, and behold, the prince of Greece is about to come. 21 "However, I will tell you what is inscribed in the writing of truth. Yet there is no one who stands firmly with me against these forces except Michael your prince ([Daniel 10:10-13, 20-21](#)).

In Daniel chapter three, Daniel's three companions are thrown into the fiery furnace, because they will not bow down before the golden image which king Nebuchadnezzar had set up. But when these three were cast into the furnace, the king looked in and was shocked to see not three, but four men inside, and they were not writhing in pain or being consumed by the flames, they were walking around inside that furnace. If not our Lord Himself, this fourth person was surely an angelic being, sent there to save the lives of these faithful men.

In chapter 10 an angel was sent to Daniel, in answer to his prayers (note verse 12). This angel informed Daniel that he had set out to come to him much sooner, but that he encountered opposition from the "prince of the kingdom of Persia" who withstood him, delaying him for 21 days. Having been left there with the kings of Persia, Michael came to his rescue. After he finished speaking with Daniel, the angel would encounter the "prince of Persia" and the "prince of Greece" (verse 20). The important thing to notice here is that angels are very much involved in the affairs of men and of nations. The godly angel came in response to Daniel's prayers and the ungodly celestial beings opposed this angel. More than this, the unholy angels seem to have a link with political kingdoms and their kings.

## The Spiritual War in the Gospels

In the Gospels of the New Testament the spiritual war is again evident. In Matthew (4:1-11) and Luke (4:1-13), the account of our Lord's temptation by Satan is recorded. Satan sought to tempt our Lord to renounce His submission to the Father by acting independently for His own selfish gain. He was, of course, unsuccessful, for which we all may be grateful. What worked on Adam and on others, would not work on this King.

Three of the Gospels record the exorcism which our Lord performed on the Gerasene demoniac.<sup>145</sup> Note the unique contribution of each account, which adds to our understanding of the spiritual war:

And when He had come to the other side into the country of the Gadarenes, two men who were demon-possessed met Him as they were coming out of the tombs; they were so exceedingly violent that no one could pass by that road. And behold, they cried out, saying, "What do we have to do with You, Son of God? Have You come here to torment us before the time?" ([Matthew 8:28-29](#)).

And seeing Jesus from a distance, he ran up and bowed down before Him; and crying out with a loud voice, he said, "What do I have to do with You, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I implore You by God, do not torment me!" For He had been saying to him, "Come out of the man, you unclean spirit!" And He was asking him, "What is your name?" And he said to Him, "My name is Legion; for we are many." And he began to entreat Him earnestly not to send them out of the country ([Mark 5:6-10](#)).

And Jesus asked him, "What is your name?" And he said, "Legion"; for many demons had entered him. And they were entreating Him not to command them to depart into the abyss" ([Luke 8:30-31](#)).

From Matthew's account we learn that these demons which possessed these men knew that their days were numbered. They expected the Lord Jesus to come and to engage them in war. What they did not understand was why He had come at that time. He had arrived early by their way of thinking. They, like all others, were not looking for two comings of the Messiah, but only one.

In Mark chapter 5 we are told that the demons begged Jesus not to be sent "out of the country" (verse 10). And in the parallel account in Luke chapter 8 we find that the demons entreated Jesus not to "send them into the abyss" (verse 31). From these two texts we would conclude that for a demon to be sent "out of the country" was also to be confined "in the abyss." Here again, as in the Book of Daniel, it seems that fallen angelic beings have certain geographical boundaries for their activities. If a demon was sent "out of the country" he understood this to mean that he was no longer free to oppose God and His people on the earth, but would thereafter be confined in chains in the abyss.

In Matthew's Gospel we learn that the church which is soon to be established is going to withstand the attacks of hell itself (16:23). Luke tells us that Satan had the audacity to demand that our Lord allow him to "sift Peter like wheat" ([Luke 22:31](#)). It was Satan who entered into Judas, using him to betray his Lord and to hand Him over to those who would arrest Him ([John 13:27](#)). In spite of his efforts to the contrary, Satan, the "ruler of this world" ([John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11](#)), was soon to be defeated on the cross of Calvary.

## The Spiritual War in the Church

Early in the Book of Acts, Satan is found opposing the people and the purposes of God. 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: "Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit, and to keep back some of the price of the land?" ([Acts 5:3](#)).

In [Acts 13:10](#), Paul rebuked Elymas the magician for opposing the gospel, calling him a "son of the devil." In 2 Corinthians chapter 2, Paul spoke of the church's reticence to forgive a repentant brother as giving Satan the opportunity to take advantage, adding that we are not ignorant of his schemes (2:10-11). Later in this same epistle, Paul speaks of Satan as the "god of this world" who has "blinded the minds of the unbelieving, that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ" (4:4). And near the end of this epistle Paul warns that Satan and his subordinates disguise themselves as true believers, thereby seeking to lead some astray by their authoritarian leadership:

13 For such men are false apostles, deceitful workers, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. 14 And no wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. 15 Therefore it is not surprising if his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their deeds ([2 Corinthians 11:13-15](#)).

In [2 Thessalonians 2:1-12](#) Paul speaks of a future day of evil, when "the man of lawlessness" is revealed, whose working is in accordance with the activity of Satan, and is accompanied by power, signs and false wonders (2:9). In [1 Timothy 3:6](#) Paul warns about laying hands too quickly on leaders, lest they become conceited and fall into the same condemnation incurred by the devil. In chapter 4, he warns of those who will fall away from the faith and pay attention to "deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons" (4:1). In chapter 5 of 1 Timothy Paul urges younger widows to get married and not to become idle gossips and busybodies. This sounds very "human," but Paul links it to satanic activity: "Therefore, I want younger widows to get married, bear children, keep house, and give the enemy no occasion for reproach; for some have already turned aside to follow Satan" ([1 Timothy 5:14-15](#)). Imagine this. Paul refers to gossiping as turning aside to follow Satan. Now who would have ever considered gossip to be satanic? Paul does.

In his epistle, James condemns the quarrels and strife which were taking place among the saints. He first links such sins to the pursuit of fleshly pleasures (4:1-3). He then indicates that such sin is rebellion against God which grieves His Holy Spirit (4:3-4). Next, Paul links quarrelling and strife with Satan:

6 But He gives a greater grace. Therefore it says, "God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble."  
7 Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you ([James 4:6-7](#)).

Peter had come to learn about Satan the hard way (see [Matthew 16:21-23; Luke 22:31](#)). And so we find him warning others of the threat which Satan poses as our adversary. Note that Peter's warning comes in the context of leadership and of submission (5:1-7):

8 Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls about like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. 9 But resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same experiences of suffering are being accomplished by your brethren who are in the world ([1 Peter 5:8-9](#)).

In the letters to the seven churches, recorded in [Revelation 2](#) and 3, the Lord Jesus frequently mentions Satan as the source of temptation and trials in the church (see 2:9, 13, 24; 3:9). The remainder of the Book of Revelation describes the coming final conflict with Satan, and his ultimate demise (see especially chapters 12 and 20).

I have a theory about the intensity of Satan's opposition against the church. He knows, as we do, that the church is being watched by the angels, and that they are being instructed by what they see.

10 Therefore the woman ought to have a symbol of authority on her head, because of the angels ([1 Corinthians 11:10](#)).

8 To me, the very least of all saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unfathomable riches of Christ, 9 and to bring to light what is the administration of the mystery which for ages has been hidden in God, who created all things; 10 in order that the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known through the church to the rulers and the authorities in the heavenly places ([Ephesians 3:8-10](#)).

I understand that a significant number of angelic beings joined with Satan during or after his rebellion against God, as described in [Isaiah 14](#) and [Ezekiel 28](#). I am also inclined to believe that [Revelation 12:4](#) may be speaking of a time yet to come (the "evil day" of [Ephesians 6:13](#)) when other angels might also join with Satan in his rebellion against God. If this is so, then it gives even greater significance to the "lessons" which the angels are learning from their observation of the church. As the angels observe the women in submission to their own husbands ([1 Corinthians 11:10](#)), they are reminded of the importance of their submission to God. It may well be that in [Job 1](#), Satan was not only trying to make a point with God, but with his fellow-angels, when he suggested that the only reason why any creature worships God is a selfish one. No wonder, then, that Satan would work so hard to corrupt the church and its message to the angels.

From these texts and many others, I believe that it is safe to say that Satan is the arch-enemy of the church. He is ever seeking to cause the saints to stumble and attempting to thwart the plans and purposes of God for His church.

## **The Spiritual War As Depicted In Ephesians**

The spiritual war which Paul describes in chapter 6 should come to us as no surprise in our study of Ephesians. Paul has already paved the way for his teaching on the Christian's conduct in the spiritual war by what he has taught us previously in the epistle.

Imagine for a moment that you are a slave, and that Paul's letter to the church at Ephesus is being read to the whole church as it gathers for worship. As a slave, your world is a small one. You have severe limitations in terms of personal freedom, and in your exposure to the world. As you hear Ephesians chapter 1, you realize that your salvation is a part of God's plan, decreed before the earth was created and time even began. You also come to learn that while God's purpose was to save you from your sin, His ultimate purpose is to sum up all things in Christ. You may be a slave, but you are a part of an eternal plan, and privileged to take part in bringing glory to God. You also learn from this chapter that Christ's power is beyond our human grasp, a power which was evidenced in the raising of Christ from the dead, and of exalting Him above all other powers. The entire celestial host is under His power, and that power is exercised toward "us who believe" (see 1:18-23).

In chapter 2, Paul reminds you that you were once dead in your sins, and alienated from God. You lived according to the lusts of your flesh, but in reality you were a pawn of Satan, unwittingly carrying out his plans

and purposes, even as he is at work in all the “sons of disobedience” (2:1-3). Because of His great mercy, you have been saved from your sins, and reconciled to God in Christ. You have been forgiven your sins and saved unto good works through the grace of God in Christ (2:4-10). You were also a pagan Gentile, separated from the people of God. In fact, you were adversaries with God’s people. But now, in Christ, you have not only been reconciled to God, you have been reconciled with His people.

In being saved, you did not merely become a Jewish proselyte. God did not reconcile Gentiles to himself by making them Jews, He reconciled both Jews and Gentiles as one new man to Himself. This means that Gentiles are not second-class citizens of heaven, nor are Jewish Christians somehow superior to Gentile believers. All are joined in one body, the church, through the Spirit of God to become a dwelling place of God.

Chapter 2 provides a significant reason for the spiritual war. As unbelievers, we were under the power and control of Satan, even though we did not know it. But when we came to faith in Christ by His grace, we were delivered from his “kingdom of darkness” and made citizens in the “kingdom of light.” Our salvation caused us no longer to be the enemies of God, but at the same time resulted in us becoming the enemies of Satan. No wonder he so aggressively attacks Christians. They were once his subjects.

In chapter 3, the slave is given an even more complete picture of the eternal plans and purposes of God. Here, Paul speaks of the “mystery” which God purposed to reveal through him. The mystery is an expansion of Paul’s words in chapter 2, verses 11-22. The mystery is the church, and that God would reconcile both Jews and Gentiles to Himself and to each other, so that they would become fellow-heirs and fellow-partakers of the promise of Christ in the gospel. And this mystery is now being revealed through the church, even as Paul has revealed it to the church. This mystery is for the instruction of the angelic hosts:

To me, the very least of all saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unfathomable riches of Christ, and to bring to light what is the administration of the mystery which for ages has been hidden in God, who created all things; in order that the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known through the church to the rulers and the authorities in the heavenly places. This was in accordance with the eternal purpose which He carried out in Christ Jesus our Lord, in whom we have boldness and confident access through faith in Him ([Ephesians 3:8-12](#)).

If the church is the classroom of angels, then the conduct of Christians in the church must surely be consistent with the “lesson” which God is teaching. Because of this, Paul exhorts Christians to “walk in a manner worthy of our calling” (4:1). The Christian’s walk is then described in [Ephesians 4:1–6:9](#). That walk is to be a walk ...

worthy of our calling (4:1)<sup>146</sup>

which contrasts with our former walk, and that of the Gentiles (4:17)

in love (5:1-2)

in wisdom (5:15)

The walk of the wise is characterized, in part, by the filling or control of the Holy Spirit (5:18), which, in turn is evident in our mutual submission one to another (5:21–6:9). It should come as no surprise that Paul would turn to the subject of our spiritual warfare immediately following his instructions on submission and obedience. This area is one in which Satan’s own rebellion is most evident, and also an area in which his attacks can be expected.

Does our slave, listening to Paul’s letter for the first time, think that his world is a small one, and that his obedience has little significance? If he does, Paul’s letter should teach him otherwise. He is engaged in a great struggle, the spiritual war. He is called upon to take up the full armor of God, and is thereby assured that he will not be defeated. If chapters 1-3 have taken our salvation and its blessings back to its roots in the eternal plan and purpose of God, then chapter 6 takes our struggle with sin back to its source—Satan. Many of the sins which seem completely human in origin, actually have a satanic source. And so Paul concludes this epistle with a

lifting of the veil, so that we may see the broader implications of our struggles with sin, and so that we may be reminded that Satan's final and complete destruction, while yet future, is certain. And so Paul has taken our salvation from its origins, in eternity past, to its consummation, in eternity future. Our lives are thus to be lived in the light of the big picture of what God is doing—the will of God. We are to adapt our lives to His will for His creation, rather than to seek to persuade God to conform to our wills.

One more thing should be said about the relationship between Paul's teaching on submission and obedience in 5:21–6:9 and his teaching on the spiritual war in 6:10–20. Submission is the giving up of our rights and the pursuit of our self-interest. The spiritual war is about not giving way, but standing fast. How often we tend to reverse these two. We are all too inclined to give up or to give in in matters where we should stand fast, and too eager to stand fast where we should give ground. We need to learn to stand where we are commanded to stand, and to submit where we are instructed to submit.

## **What Our Text Tells Us About The Spiritual War (6:10-13)**

10 Finally, be strong in the Lord, and in the strength of His might. 11 Put on the full armor of God, that you may be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. 12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places. 13 Therefore, take up the full armor of God, that you may be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm.

**(1) Coming to faith in Jesus Christ is to be understood as entering into every spiritual blessings in the heavenly places in Christ** ([Ephesians 1:3](#)), but it is also the commencement of a great struggle with Satan and his forces. Let those who would dwell on the blessings of our faith also take note of the battle which we have entered into by faith in Jesus Christ, and which we must wage in His strength.

**(2) The church is engaged in a spiritual war, and its enemy is Satan and a host of unseen angelic and celestial enemies whose power vastly exceeds our own.** With a few exceptions, our enemies remain invisible to our eyes, but they nevertheless are real, and so is their opposition. These celestial enemies seem to have various forms, as is suggested by the variety of terms used by Paul to identify them: “rulers,” “powers,” “world forces of this darkness,” “spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places” (verse 12). I doubt that we can fully grasp the variety and the number of those forces which oppose us. I would simply remind you that there seem to be various rankings of angelic beings, and that the description of heaven in Revelation speaks of creatures which will probably not be understood by us until we are in God's presence (see [Revelation 5:6, 8, 11](#)).

The angelic beings have great power. Satan would seem to possess the greatest power. One dare not underestimate this power. Some time ago I heard a fine preacher speak of Satan as a “wimp.” I was shocked. How could one ever come to this conclusion from our text, or from any other? To underestimate his power is to underestimate the immensity of the spiritual struggle, and the corresponding need which we have for divine enablement, if we are to withstand Satan's attacks. I would remind you that those who speak lightly of the celestial powers should be taken back by these verses:

9 then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from temptation, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment for the day of judgment, 10 and especially those who indulge the flesh in its corrupt desires and despise authority. Daring, self-willed, they do not tremble when they revile angelic majesties, 11 whereas angels who are greater in might and power do not bring a reviling judgment against them before the Lord. 12 But these, like unreasoning animals, born as creatures of instinct to be captured and killed, reviling where they have no knowledge, will in the destruction of those creatures also be destroyed ([2 Peter 2:9-12](#)).

8 Yet in the same manner these men, also by dreaming, defile the flesh, and reject authority, and revile angelic majesties. 9 But Michael the archangel, when he disputed with the devil and argued about the body of Moses, did not dare pronounce against him a railing judgment, but said, "The Lord rebuke you." 10 But these men revile the things which they do not understand; and the things which they know by instinct, like unreasoning animals, by these things they are destroyed ([Jude 8-10](#)).

We dare not underestimate our enemy, "who prowls about like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour" ([1 Peter 5:8](#)). From these words in 1 Peter, it take it that Satan does not have false teeth. He not only desires to devour, he will devour those who do not take up the "whole armor of God."

**(3) Paul's focus in our text is not on every aspect of Satan's opposition to God and man, but on his war with the saints.** Satan carries on his warfare on various fronts. He seeks to keep unbelievers from the truth, and he may use his demons to possess men, but in Ephesians chapter 6 Paul's concern is with Satan's war against the church, and with the defenses which God has provided the Christian.

**(4) In the spiritual war Satan employs a variety of strategies to oppose and to defeat the Christian.** Paul does not speak of the "scheme" of the devil, but of his "schemes" (plural). When Satan tempted our Lord, as recorded in [Matthew 4](#) and [Luke 4](#), he gave up, for the moment. But Luke makes it clear that it was only for a time, only until he could regroup: "And when the devil had finished every temptation, he departed from Him until an opportune time" ([Luke 4:13](#)). Not only did Satan tempt our Lord with several different lines of approach, he purposed to continue to tempt Him, when the opportunity presented itself. Satan is an opportunist, with an almost endless variety of "schemes."

**(5) At the present, Satan's opposition against the church is not a frontal attack, but a subversive attack through intrigue, deception, and trickery.** The demons were shocked to discover that Jesus had come. They were expecting Him to come later, for their final confrontation (see [Matthew 8:28-29](#)). Satan's strategy for the present time (until the final conflict) is that of subversive activity. He is presently employing deception and intrigue to trip up the Christian. This is a time of guerilla warfare, of snipers and booby traps, not of frontal attack.

**(6) There is a coming, "evil day," when the spiritual war will intensify, and when the dangers for believers will increase.** It is true, in one sense, that the days are evil: "Therefore be careful how you walk, not as unwise men, but as wise, making the most of your time, because the days are evil" ([Ephesians 5:15-16](#)). But Paul does not seem to be speaking of "evil days" in general but of a coming "evil day." I understand this day to be that future day when satanic opposition will intensify, leading to the second coming of our Lord and the final destruction of Satan and his hosts (see [2 Thessalonians 2:1-12](#); [Revelation 12](#), 20). The Christian warrior is to be characterized by vigilance, so that he will not be caught off guard by Satan's schemes, and so that he will be able to stand in the final days of confrontation.

**(7) The Christian's weapons have been divinely provided, in Christ.** Putting on the "full armor of God" is putting on the armor which our Lord girded Himself, when He set out to bring about the salvation of His own in an evil day:

1 Then a shoot will spring from the stem of Jesse, And a branch from his roots will bear fruit. 2 And the Spirit of the LORD will rest on Him, The spirit of wisdom and understanding, The spirit of counsel and strength, The spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD. 3 And He will delight in the fear of the LORD, And He will not judge by what His eyes see, Nor make a decision by what His ears hear; 4 But with righteousness He will judge the poor, And decide with fairness for the afflicted of the earth; And He will strike the earth with the rod of His mouth, And with the breath of His lips He will slay the wicked. 5 Also righteousness will be the belt about His loins, And faithfulness the belt about His waist ([Isaiah 11:1-5](#)).

16 And He saw that there was no man, And was astonished that there was no one to intercede; Then His own arm brought salvation to Him; And His righteousness upheld Him. 17 And He put on righteousness like a breastplate, And a helmet of salvation on His head; And He put on garments of vengeance for clothing, And wrapped Himself with zeal as a mantle. 18 According to their deeds, so He will repay, Wrath to His adversaries, recompense to His enemies; To the coastlands He will make recompense. 19 So they will fear the name of the LORD from the west And His glory from the rising of the sun, For He will come like a rushing stream, Which the wind of the LORD drives. 20 “And a Redeemer will come to Zion, And to those who turn from transgression in Jacob,” declares the LORD ([Isaiah 59:16-20](#)).

When we put on the “full armor of God” we are actually putting on Christ:

11 And this do, knowing the time, that it is already the hour for you to awaken from sleep; for now salvation is nearer to us than when we believed. 12 The night is almost gone, and the day is at hand. Let us therefore lay aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light. 13 Let us behave properly as in the day, not in carousing and drunkenness, not in sexual promiscuity and sensuality, not in strife and jealousy. 14 But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh in regard to its lusts ([Romans 13:11-14](#)).

All too often, when men write about the spiritual warfare, too much prominence is given to Satan and his demons. Not so in Scripture, and certainly not so in our text. Paul sees to it that it is Christ who is preeminent. The enemy is Satan and his subordinates, but the victory is in Christ, and in the armor which He provides the saints.

**(8) Paul’s instruction to put on the full armor of God is a command.** During the Second World War, my father and many other men received a letter in the mail, that began something like this: “Greetings from the President of the United States.” That letter, as you may know, was notification of having been drafted into the military. The President’s “greeting” was not an invitation, it was a summons. One did not dare to ignore this letter, without expecting serious consequences.

Paul’s instructions concerning the spiritual war are similar, in that Paul is informing every Christian that they have been drafted, not to fight a physical war, but to fight a spiritual war. We are not encouraged to take up the “full armor of God,” we are commanded to do so. These verses are our marching orders, and we dare not ignore them, or fail to carry them out to the letter.

**(9) Our protection against Satan’s attacks is assured only if and when we take up the *full* armor of God.** Satan’s schemes are many, and he attacks us at any point he considers vulnerable. Thus, our armor must be complete. We cannot pick and choose our armor, but rather we must put all of it on. We must be completely equipped, or we are vulnerable to his attacks.

Paul’s emphasis on the “full” or “complete” armor of God in Ephesians chapter 6 teaches us something else, by implication. If we must put on the “full armor of God” in order to stand, then the armor of Ephesians chapter 6 must be the full or complete armor that we need. Why would Paul be so emphatic about putting on the full armor of God and then not tell us what all of that armor is. I would therefore conclude that we do not need any armor other than that found in [Ephesians 6:10-20](#). I would also conclude that any “armor” which men might suggest in addition to God’s full armor is not necessary, and is indeed unnecessary.

**(10) Our duty is not to attack Satan, or to defeat him, but rather to withstand his attacks.** Our task is defensive, not offensive. Those who would attack Satan do not understand Satan’s power, or God’s plan. It is not we who will defeat Satan, but Christ. Our duty is to resist Satan, not to remove him. I hear Christians speak of “binding Satan” and I now hear Christians sing as though we can “run Satan out of town.” The Bible says nothing of these kinds of warfare, but only of our standing fast in the face of his attacks.

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 “overcomers” do not defeat Satan. Indeed, many of them actually die at his hand (12:11). 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).

And I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, “Now the salvation, and the power, and the kingdom of our God and the authority of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren has been thrown down, who accuses them before our God day and night. And they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb and because of the word of their testimony, and they did not love their life even to death” ([Revelation 12:10-11](#)).

And they came up on the broad plain of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city, and fire came down from heaven and devoured them. And the devil who deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are also; and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever ([Revelation 20:9-10](#)).

In spiritual warfare the battle is the Lord’s. At times, God simply commanded the people to “stand still” and watch the Lord win the battle, without any human help:

10 And as Pharaoh drew near, the sons of Israel looked, and behold, the Egyptians were marching after them, and they became very frightened; so the sons of Israel cried out to the Lord. 11 Then they said to Moses, “Is it because there were no graves in Egypt that you have taken us away to die in the wilderness? Why have you dealt with us in this way, bringing us out of Egypt? 12 “Is this not the word that we spoke to you in Egypt, saying, ‘Leave us alone that we may serve the Egyptians’? For it would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the wilderness.” 13 But Moses said to the people, “**Do not fear! Stand by and see the salvation of the Lord which He will accomplish for you today;** for the Egyptians whom you have seen today, you will never see them again forever. 14 “The Lord will fight for you while you keep silent” ([Exodus 14:10-14](#)).

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:

41 Then the Philistine came on and approached David, with the shield-bearer in front of him. 42 When the Philistine looked and saw David, he disdained him; for he was but a youth, and ruddy, with a handsome appearance. 43 And the Philistine said to David, “Am I a dog, that you come to me with sticks?” And the Philistine cursed David by his gods. 44 The Philistine also said to David, “Come to me, and I will give your flesh to the birds of the sky and the beasts of the field.” 45 Then David said to the Philistine, “You come to me with a sword, a spear, and a javelin, but I come to you in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have taunted. 46 “This day the Lord will deliver you up into my hands, and I will strike you down and remove your head from you. And I will give the dead bodies of the army of the Philistines this day to the birds of the sky and the wild beasts of the earth, that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel, 47 **and that all this assembly may know that the Lord does not deliver by sword or by spear; for the battle is the Lord’s and He will give you into our hands.**” 48 Then it happened when the Philistine rose and came and drew near to meet David, that David ran quickly toward the battle line to meet the Philistine. 49 And David put his hand into his bag and took from it a stone and slung it, and struck the Philistine on his forehead. And the stone sank into his forehead, so that he fell on his face to the ground. 50 Thus David prevailed over the Philistine with a sling and a stone, and he struck the Philistine and killed him; but there was no sword in David’s hand. 51 Then David ran and stood over the Philistine and took his sword and drew it out of its sheath and killed him, and cut off his head with it. When the Philistines saw that their champion was dead, they fled ([1 Samuel 17:41-51](#)).

**(11) Satan's defeat and our defense is spoken of in terms of the gospel.** Jesus spoke of Satan's defeat a number of times in the Gospels. In every instance, His defeat is viewed as accomplished at the cross of Calvary. Our salvation and Satan's defeat has already been accomplished by our Lord, when He died on the cross of Calvary and then rose from the dead, triumphing over His foes, foremost of whom is Satan himself.

“Now judgment is upon this world; now the ruler of this world shall be cast out” ([John 12:31](#)).

“And He, when He comes, will convict the world concerning sin, and righteousness, and judgment; concerning sin, because they do not believe in Me; and concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father, and you no longer behold Me; and concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world has been judged” ([John 16:8-11](#)).

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, and the word of God. Our deliverance from Satan's power and our defense from his subsequent attacks are found in Christ and in the gospel which His death and resurrection have made a reality.

**(12) The nature of our weapons tells us a great deal about the nature of the war we are in, and of the methods which Satan will employ in his efforts to destroy us.** As we proceed with our study of each element of our armor, we will see that the armor which God has provided corresponds precisely to the schemes of Satan, and His methods of waging war with the saints. Thus, to know the armor which God has provided is to know the ways in which Satan will seek our downfall.

## **The Spiritual War From A Broad Biblical Perspective**

Ephesians chapter 6 is one of the most thorough treatments of the spiritual war in the New Testament, it is but one of many texts which sheds light on this subject. In addition to the contribution of Ephesians chapter 6, we may add several other observations concerning the spiritual war which will help us in our study of [Ephesians 6:10-20](#).

**(1) Our victory over Satan's attacks is not always evident in terms of his defeat and our success, but is sometimes won in what looks like our defeat and his success.** When Jesus died on the cross of Calvary, it looked very much like he had won. But in our Lord's apparent defeat (and Satan's apparent victory) the Savior brought about our salvation and Satan's defeat. So it will be for some saints. The Book of Revelation informs us that there will be a time when Satan and his subordinates will appear to triumph over the saints, but this should be viewed as a momentary defeat which accomplishes the purposes of God, and which serves as a prelude to Satan's final destruction:

9 And when He broke the fifth seal, I saw underneath the altar the souls of those who had been slain because of the word of God, and because of the testimony which they had maintained; 10 and they cried out with a loud voice, saying, “How long, O Lord, holy and true, wilt Thou refrain from judging and avenging our blood on those who dwell on the earth?” 11 And there was given to each of them a white robe; and they were told that they should rest for a little while longer, until the number of their fellow servants and their brethren who were to be killed even as they had been, should be completed also ([Revelation 6:9-11](#)).

**(2) Satan's opposition is not to be found so much in the bizarre and the supernatural as it is in that which seems natural and even human.** You will notice that the subject of demonization is not raised in our text. Neither is any emphasis given here to lying wonders and signs, although these are a part of Satan's arsenal of weapons. Satan tempted Adam and Eve to doubt God's goodness and to disobey His Word. His opposition to Job was evident in the form of natural disaster and human illness. The same appears to be the case with his affliction of Paul (see [2 Corinthians 12:7](#)). His temptation of David seems to be in terms of an appeal to his

pride ([1 Chronicles 21:1](#)). So, too, his temptation of our Lord was an appeal to what we would think of as natural ambitions and desires ([Matthew 4:1-11](#); [Luke 4:1-13](#)).

**(3) Satan's opposition to the believer is seldom direct, and is most often through other means, which we might not recognize as being satanically inspired.** In very few instances does Satan directly involve himself in his attack against men. He did directly tempt our Lord, but this is certainly the exception. Usually, he prefers to "speak" through other instruments, so that we don't recognize that it is he who is opposing us. He spoke through a serpent in the garden of Eden, and he spoke through Peter when he resisted Christ's plan to die on the cross ([Matthew 16:23](#)). More often, Satan employs his demons to do his bidding (see [2 Corinthians 12:7](#)).

We are all familiar with these three forces, all of which are hostile to the believer: the world, the flesh, and the devil. I would like to suggest that Satan most often employs the world and the flesh to attack the believer. And so it is that Satan is sometimes identified as the ultimate culprit, when it would appear that the world or the flesh were the source of one's temptation. Who would have seen Satan behind David's numbering of the Israelites ([1 Chronicles 21:1](#))? Who would have imagined that Judas' temptation arose from anything other than his own greed? Who would have thought that the deception of Ananias and Sapphira was motivated by anything more than their own greed and desire for man's praise? When the Scriptures inform us that Satan is behind a particular temptation, it is because the forces seem so natural we would not have expected any deeper, more sinister, source.

Satan is more than willing to accept men's adoration and obedience indirectly. If we become his servants by serving our own interests and seeking the satisfaction of our fleshly desires, Satan gladly accepts our indirect submission to him. In fact, I think he even delights in it, because he is the great deceiver. How he must find pleasure in letting men think they are free, when they are really his slaves!

It does not seem advisable to give Satan credit for every evil deed, or to blame him for every instance of opposition, difficulty, or temptation. Job did not know the Satan was behind the tragedies which came into his life. It does not seem that he needed to know. What he needed to know was that an all-wise, all-powerful God was in control of the universe, and of his life. What Job needed to do more than to "bind Satan" was to believe and obey God. Satan's fingerprints may often be found on much of the evil and suffering which takes place in this world, but some of the evil comes from our own flesh ([James 1:13-15](#)), and from living in a sinful and fallen world ([Romans 8:18-25](#)).

**(4) Satan's opposition is the outworking of his own rebellion and distorted perception.** To put it simply, Satan's opposition is guided by his own warped perception of reality. He cannot believe that anyone would worship God on the basis of Who He is, rather than on the basis of what He gives. Satan cannot think of God as our Reward, but only as the Rewarder of those who do His bidding. And so it is that Satan sought to afflict Job, thinking that his submission and obedience would immediately cease.

Satan tempts those in power by appealing to their pride and ambition, because that is the way he responded to his position of power. He appeals to those under authority to act independently, rather than to submit to those over us. He appeals to self-interest and he urges us to shun self-sacrifice. He knows nothing of grace, and he delights in the downfall of others.

Satan's perception is warped. He is not all-knowing, nor is he all-powerful. He operates on the basis of his own distorted perception of reality. Sinful men easily and readily identify with his mindset and motivation, but Christians must reject it for the evil it is. And when Christians act like their Master, Satan is mystified and angered. He cannot fathom why anyone would submit to God and worship him.

**(5) Satan is a defeated foe, but his complete demise is yet future.** We have already alluded to Satan's defeat at the cross of Calvary. Nevertheless, we shall say it once again. Satan's demise is certain.

**(6) Satan's present opposition to the people and purposes of God appears to be detrimental to the church, but in reality Satan is actually furthering God's purpose and plan for creation.** God has purposed to delay casting Satan into the lake of fire because in his freedom to operate as the "god of this world" he is unwittingly fulfilling God's purposes. He is thus bringing glory to God and producing that which God uses for our good. While Satan inspired Judas to betray our Lord, this was necessary to accomplish our salvation. And although Satan's messenger may have afflicted Paul with a thorn in the flesh, this was for Paul's good (see [2 Corinthians 12:7-10](#)). Satan is always on a chain, God's chain. While he carries on his work with evil intent, God uses him for our good, and for His glory. There is not one thing which Satan is allowed to do which does not promote God's purposes, His glory, and our good. The outcome of the spiritual war between Satan and God is certain. The struggle is a part of God's eternal plan. And standing against his attacks in the strength of the full armor of God is our duty.

## Conclusion

There is a war going on. It is not a war that is like the wars which are currently going on between nations today (although such wars may be a part of the bigger war). It is a spiritual war. It is a war between Satan and his fallen celestial allies and Christ and His church. It is an invisible war in that we fight against unseen forces. It is therefore a war which must be waged by faith, and not by sight. It is a war that we cannot fight in our own strength, but only in the strength which God Himself supplies.

The war is not being waged to see which side will win. God has already won the war by the death of His Son on the cross of Calvary (see [John 12:31; 16:11](#)). The war is for our good, and for God's glory. The war is a part of God's instruction to the angelic hosts (see [Ephesians 3:8-11](#)). The war is a part of God's eternal plan and purpose for his creation.

The great question is not, "Who will win?," but "Who will stand?" The question is not whether God is on our side as much as whether or not we are on His side. I remember this fascinating event in the Old Testament:

13 Now it came about when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, a man was standing opposite him with his sword drawn in his hand, and Joshua went to him and said to him, "Are you for us or for our adversaries?" 14 And he said, "No, rather I indeed come now as captain of the host of the LORD." And Joshua fell on his face to the earth, and bowed down, and said to him, "What has my lord to say to his servant?" 15 And the captain of the LORD's host said to Joshua, "Remove your sandals from your feet, for the place where you are standing is holy." And Joshua did so ([Joshua 5:13-15](#)).

Joshua initially failed to recognize the captain of the Lord's host. And so, when he approached him, Joshua asked this "man" if he was for or against Israel. The angel identified himself as the captain of the Lord's host, making it clear that Israel was to follow him. We are sometimes too interested in getting God on our side, rather than getting on His side. He is the commander. His is the battle. David understood this even as he single-handedly opposed Goliath in the name of the Lord:

44 The Philistine also said to David, "Come to me, and I will give your flesh to the birds of the sky and the beasts of the field." 45 Then David said to the Philistine, "You come to me with a sword, a spear, and a javelin, but I come to you in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have taunted. 46 "This day the LORD will deliver you up into my hands, and I will strike you down and remove your head from you. And I will give the dead bodies of the army of the Philistines this day to the birds of the sky and the wild beasts of the earth, that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel, 47 and that all this assembly may know that the LORD does not deliver by sword or by spear; for the battle is the LORD's and He will give you into our hands" ([1 Samuel 17:44-47](#)).

And so I must ask you this simple question, my friend. In this great spiritual war, whose side are you on? If you are still “dead in your transgressions and sins,” you are unknowingly under Satan’s control, serving him and in rebellion against God ([Ephesians 2:1-3](#)). You are at war *with* God. If, by faith in Jesus Christ, you acknowledge your sin and trust in the victory which Jesus has already won on the cross, then you shall be saved, in which case you shall wage war *for* God. How great is the difference between those who fight *with* God and those who fight *for* Him. Whose side are you on in the spiritual war?

We are in great danger, not when the enemy is great and powerful, but when we think that we can stand in our own strength, rather than in the strength which God provides. Peter learned this lesson the hard way (see [Luke 22:31-34](#)). Paul warns every Christian about the danger of self-confidence: “Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall” ([1 Corinthians 10:12](#)). When God delivered the Israelites out of their Egyptian captivity and brought them into the land of Canaan, He purposely did not drive out all of the Canaanites. He purposed that they would have to possess the land by waging war against the Canaanites:

29 “I will not drive them out before you in a single year, that the land may not become desolate, and the beasts of the field become too numerous for you. 30 I will drive them out before you little by little, until you become fruitful and take possession of the land. 31 And I will fix your boundary from the Red Sea to the sea of the Philistines, and from the wilderness to the River Euphrates; for I will deliver the inhabitants of the land into your hand, and you will drive them out before you” ([Exodus 23:29-31](#)).

God did not give the Israelites an immediate and total victory over their adversaries the Canaanites. They were to wage war against them and drive them out, but it was the Lord who would give them the victory, and to this end He sent His angel to defeat the enemy ([Exodus 23:20-23; 32:34; 33:2](#)). We are in a spiritual war and we must put on God’s armor and stand against the enemy. But the victory will be the Lord’s, for it is only in His strength that we stand.

When we fail to enter into the war as God has commanded us, the consequences are most serious. I wish to remind you of two of the great sins in David’s life, which had devastating consequences for himself and for his nation. I want you to note that both of these sins were directly related to his failure to go to war, as was his duty as the king of Israel. Two times we read that David stayed in Jerusalem “at the time when kings go to war”:

Then it happened in the spring, at the time when kings go out to battle, that David sent Joab and her servants with him and all Israel, and they destroyed the sons of Ammon and besieged Rabbah. But David stayed at Jerusalem ([2 Samuel 11:1](#)).

Then it happened in the spring, at the time when kings go out to battle, that Joab led out the army and ravaged the land of the sons of Ammon, and came and besieged Rabbah. But David stayed at Jerusalem. And Joab struck Rabbah and over threw it ([1 Chronicles 20:1](#)).

In the Book of 2 Samuel, David’s decision to stay at Jerusalem, rather than to go to war, resulted in a great moral disaster. Not only did David sin by sleeping with Bathsheba, he then attempted to cover up his sin by having Uriah, the husband of Bathsheba, killed in battle. David was not killing the enemy, but was killing his trusted soldier.

In the account recorded in 1 Chronicles, David’s decision to stay at home (perhaps the same one recorded in [2 Samuel 11](#)) was followed shortly by his sinful decision to number the Israelites, which led to divine judgment. Now, instead of waging war against the enemy, Satan is waging war against David, and God brings judgment on the nation. When we fail to wage war, we are really losing the war.

One final thing should be said as we conclude this study of the spiritual war. As I understand Paul’s words about spiritual warfare in chapter 6 in the context of the entire epistle to the Ephesians, I am inclined to say that at this moment in time we wage the spiritual war, not in terms of grand battles and heroic actions, but in terms

of simple faith in the teachings of Paul in chapters 1-3 and in terms of our obedience to the commands of Paul as found in chapters 4-6.

Where are the battle lines drawn for children in Ephesians? In terms of their obedience to their parents, as to the Lord. Slaves stand firm in the faith as they obey their masters. Fathers stand fast as they love their wives and as they teach their children the “discipline and instruction of the Lord.” Wives stand fast when they submit to their husbands as to the Lord. We all stand fast as we cease to walk as we once did as Gentiles (4:17-32), and as we walk in love (5:1-6), in light (5:7-13), and in wisdom (5:15ff.) and in submission one to another (5:22–6:9). The war is a matter of trusting and obeying our Lord. As we do so now, in these evil days, we prepare ourselves for the great “evil day” which is yet to come.

When our life comes to an end, I pray that we will be able, like Paul, to say, “I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith” ([2 Timothy 4:7](#)).

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144 Some understand [Jude 1:6](#) to refer to these “sons of God.” If this is so (as I am inclined to believe), then these angelic beings were confined to the abyss because they crossed over a forbidden boundary between men and angels, in addition to the fact that they sought to overturn the plan and the promise of God.

145 Matthew’s account informs us that there were actually two demoniacs, while both Mark and Luke focus on just one of these two men.

146 Note that when Paul speaks of the spiritual gifts which our Lord bestows on His church, they are said to be the fruit of His victory over “a host of captives” which He has “led captive.” These “captives” must certainly be those opposing Him, and if not directly, then he must at least indirectly be speaking of the angelic forces which have allied themselves with Satan in opposing God.