

**Eph 6:10–18 (ESV)** Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. <sup>(11)</sup> Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. <sup>(12)</sup> For 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. <sup>(13)</sup> Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm. <sup>(14)</sup> Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, <sup>(15)</sup> and, as shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace. <sup>(16)</sup> In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one; <sup>(17)</sup> and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, <sup>(18)</sup> praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end, keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints,

## 1. We come to one of the most important passages in Scripture

A. Here we move from the incredible heights of theological truths – such as:

- 1). We've been chosen before foundations of the earth.  
Blessed in Christ with every spiritual blessing  
We have the indwelling Spirit as a guarantee we will be with God in glory  
We have been given new life in Christ and have been forgiven through his shed blood  
Through the Spirit we can understand God's love for us that is beyond comprehension  
And we can experience the fullness of God in our lives
- 2). We have moved from one exhilarating theological peak to another – breath taking grace

B. But now in 6:10 Paul's writing takes on an ominous tone

- 1). All that potential of Christianity will not be experienced in the comfort zone but on the battlefield
  - a). Every believer is engaged in a war!
- 2). Paul calls it "Wrestling" in v. 12 = word means to struggle for victory

**Point:** All you need to live your Christian life has been given to you – it is available

A. But the truth is – it's not going to be easy - You will live your life out against Satanic resistance

## 2. Where we're headed in our study

- A. The next two weeks will be looking at an introduction to spiritual warfare
- B. Then we will dig into the spiritual armor – piece by piece
  - 1). What it is – what attack it protects us from – how to use it

**Transition:** Let's begin by looking at the war – when and where it started and how it will end

# I. THE BEGINNING AND ENDING OF THE WAR

## When the War Began

### 1. This spiritual battle began in the heavenlies sometime after the creation of man

- A. In Genesis 1:31 we read "God saw all he had made (including man) and it was *very good*"
  - 1). At this point there was harmony in God's creation – but soon that would be shattered
- B. Sometime after that "Very good" *Satan rebelled* – by Genesis 3 he is in the garden tempting man

### 2. What caused Satan to rebel? It was pride

- A. It seems he was the most glorious of all of God's created beings – that went to his head
  - 1). He wasn't content with being number 2 – he wanted to be worshipped like God was  
**Is 14:12–15 (ESV)** "How you are fallen from heaven, O Day Star, son of Dawn! How you are cut down to the ground, you who laid the nations low! <sup>(13)</sup> You said in your heart, 'I will ascend to heaven; above the stars of God I will set my throne on high; I will sit on the mount of assembly in the far reaches of the north; <sup>(14)</sup> I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High.' <sup>(15)</sup> But you are brought down to Sheol, to the far reaches of the pit.
- B. He tried to assert his power and rise above God
  - 1). Rev 12 tells us 1/3 of the angels followed him in his rebellion

- 2). God responded by casting Satan and the fallen angels out of heaven
  - C. Shows how persuasive he can be – able to convince 1/3 of the angels who lived with God to rebel
- Transition:** So God casts Satan out of heaven and the war spread throughout the universe

## The War Moves to Earth

### 1. In Genesis 3 we find Satan in the garden tempting man

- A. Again we see his power of persuasion – as he seduces man to defy God
  - 1). He convinced Eve that God was a liar who didn't want what was best for them
- B. When Adam and Eve fell their rebel nature flowed downstream to all of their descendants (us)
  - 1). Now everybody is born with a hereditary hostility towards God
  - 2). We all come into this world at war with our creator

**Transition:** So you have Satan at war with God and now man is at war with God

- A. In the book of Daniel we find the angels and demons are at war with each other

## The War Is Raging Throughout the Universe

### 1. Daniel 10 gives some insight about what is happening in the invisible realm

- A. He writes that a holy angel was dispatched to go to Daniel when he prayed for wisdom
  - 1). But was delayed 21 days by a powerful fallen angel
  - 2). Eventually Michael the Archangel was able to free him
- B. I think we would be amazed and horrified if our eyes were opened to the war raging around us
  - 1). There may be angels fighting in this room

**Transition:** So this war began sometime after the creation of man

- A. God cast the fallen angels out of heaven – and the war spread throughout the universe

## When Will the War End?

### 1. Personally: It will not end until we are in glory with our Lord

- A. As long as we are alive on this earth we will be engaged in this conflict
- B. I think we think there will come a time when we'll be immune to the fight
  - 1). A time when our spiritual maturity allows us to rise above the struggle
  - 2). But truth is – more effective we become for Christ the more intense the battle becomes

**Thought:** Again. This is why this passage is so important

- A. Because we are called to a warfare that is not constant – but is consistent
  - 1). Therefore we have to know how to fight well as taught in this passage
- B. This also tells us something about the Christian life I've already hinted at
  - 1). The potential of the Christian life is amazing – it is referred to as the abundant life
    - a). We are called to a joy inexpressible and full of glory  
And to a peace that passes understanding  
A life characterized by satisfaction and contentment
    - b). It is a life governed by divine promises that meet every need and every situation
  - 2). But *we will enjoy those blessings on the battlefield* – not in the comfort zone
    - a). *It will be enjoyed by those who have learned to use the truths in this passage*

**Transition:** Personally it ends when we're in glory – but there's coming a time when it will end for good

### 2. Universally: It will end when God finally says "That's enough"

- A. One day when all of his purposes are accomplished he's going to wrap it all up

- B. The devil and all who followed his rebellion against Jesus Christ will be stand before God  
Will be judged for those sins that are in the books and will be cast into hell for all of eternity
- C. God will then destroy this universe with fire and begin again
  - 1). New heaven and earth untouched by Satan's rebellion and sin

**Transition:** Let's take a quick look at who we are contending with – the combatants

## II. THE COMBATANTS IN THE FIGHT

**Eph 6:12 (ESV)** For 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.

### We Contend with Satan

#### 1. The Devil doesn't want us to know we are contending with him

- A. He'd rather have people believe he doesn't exist
  - 1). Therefore he's promoted such lies as he's a figment of religious fanatics imagination  
Even a needed scape goat to blame their transgressions upon – "The Devil made me do it"
  - 2). He's fine with people believing he's a red-skinned, horned, pointy tailed cartoon character
- B. He wants to fly under the radar if he can – destroying lives by stealth
  - 1). Why? If we don't think he is real – we will see no need to defend ourselves
  - 2). Therefore we won't take this seriously and we won't be prepared for the fight

#### 2. But Scripture teaches he is very real, very personal, active, and angry

- A. John tells us how he came to earth when he was cast out of heaven  
**Rev 12:12 (NIV)** Therefore rejoice, you heavens and you who dwell in them! But woe to the earth and the sea, because the devil has gone down to you! *He is filled with fury, because he knows that his time is short.*
- B. But he's clever - therefore we won't always see that fury – he can come as an angel of light
  - 1). He will use whatever tactic is most effective to thwart the purposes of God
    - a). When frightening people works he comes as a roaring lion – 1 Peter 5:8
    - b). Other times he comes in the guise of helping – as an angel of light – 2 Cor 11:4
      - 1a). Whispering advice that seems beneficial but opens the door to compromise
  - 2). But the aim of all his working is to stop the purposes of God

#### 3. The names he is given reveals what he is like

- A. The vile one. Tempter. Slanderer. Accuser. And the Spirit at work at those who refuse to obey God

#### 4. He has great powers and is a master of deception (shouldn't surprise us)

**Kent Hughes:** ... he is supremely cunning. ... He has been honing his methods for millennia. His emissaries visited the church councils at Nicea and Chalcedon. He sat in on medieval faculty meetings. He is an accomplished philosopher, theologian, and psychologist. He has had thousands of years to study.

I am no genius at mathematics, but even with my limited capabilities I could be terrific at math if I worked at it for 100 years. If I labored hard at it for 1,000 years and read all the learned theories, I would be a Newton or an Einstein. Or what if I had 10,000 years? Given that time, any of us could become the world's greatest philosopher or psychologist or theologian or linguist (we could curse or preach in a thousand languages). Satan has had multiple millennia to study and master the human disciplines, and when it comes to human subversion, he is the ultimate manipulator.

- A. The Scriptures are filled with examples of how cunning and crafty he is
  - 1). We've seen how he convinced the angels living with God to join him in rebellion  
And How he seduced Adam and Eve to follow him after walking with God so intimately
- B. As we move on – we see how he deceived the children of Israel right after being delivered from Egypt
  - 1). Despite God's miraculous power with the 10 plagues and parting of the Red Sea

- 2). It wasn't long before Satan convinced them to worship a golden calf they had made  
Declaring "This is the god who delivered you Israel out of Egypt"
  - B. Move to the time of Jesus
    - 1). Despite all the prophecies of the coming Messiah  
And all his powerful teaching validated by the miracles
    - 2). Still Satan was able to persuade Israel to reject and murder her Messiah
  - C. Move to the "Last days"
    - 1). He will convince Israel that the Anti-Christ is their Messiah rather than Jesus Christ
- Transition:** So we struggle against Satan – but there are more in that list in v. 12

## We Struggle With the Fallen Angels (Demons)

### 1. Satan is not omnipresent (every where) our battle is primarily with demons

- A. We see they are very organized – the rankings are in v. 12  
Rulers, authorities, cosmic powers over this present darkness, the spiritual forces of evil
- Transition:** We struggle against Satan and the angels who followed him – one more

## We Struggle Against Human Beings

### 1. Man is not our enemy – "Our struggle is not with flesh and blood"

- A. But Satan will use man as a tool to accomplish his purposes – to stop what God is doing
  - 1). We see this connection in the word "Schemes" in v. 11 Methodeia  
**Eph 6:11 (ESV)** Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the *schemes of the devil.*
  - 2). That word is only used in one other place in NT – Eph 4:14 – talking about false teachers  
**Eph 4:14 (ESV)** so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful *schemes.*
  - 3). These false teachers are stirred by the devil to teach doctrines inspired by hell  
**Isn't that what Paul says? 1 Ti 4:1–2 (ESV)** Now the Spirit expressly says that in later times some will depart from the faith by devoting themselves to deceitful spirits and *teachings of demons, (2) through the insincerity of liars whose consciences are seared,*
    - a). Teachings of demons - Taught by men – who are empowered by Satan
  - 4). We think heresy is not that big of a deal – it is a huge part of this war! The battle rages over truth
- B. Balance: Must remember when man comes against us to hinder God's purposes they aren't the enemy
  - 1). They are just instruments the devil is using – puppets ensnared by him
  - 2). Our mission is to preach truth to them – praying that God will grant them repentance  
**2 Tim 2:24-26 (NIV)** And the Lord's servant must not quarrel; instead, he must be kind to everyone, able to teach, not resentful. (25) Those who oppose him he must gently instruct, *in the hope that God will grant them repentance leading them to a knowledge of the truth, (26) and that they will come to their senses and escape from the trap of the devil, who has taken them captive to do his will.*

**Transition:** We've seen where the war began – how it will end – seen the combatants

- A. Now let's look at the devil's battle plan

## III. THE SATANIC SCHEMES

**Eph 6:11 (ESV)** Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against *the schemes* of the devil.

**Intro:** We can simplify these schemes down to two categories = *Murder and Mixture*

## Murder

### 1. The devil has always tried to stop God's purposes through violence

- A. In Exodus 1 the Egyptian Pharaoh gives the order to kill off all the Jewish babies
  - 1). Why? This was a Satanic attempt to stop the Jewish line the Messiah would come out of
- B. Same in NT (Mt. 2) - King Herod has all baby boys in Bethlehem 2 years old and younger put to death
  - 1). This was Satan going after the Messiah – trying to stop him from being born

### 2. Fear and terror have always been used by the devil to thwart God's purposes

- A. Sometimes this works – there are areas in this world that were once vibrant Christian centers
  - 1). But because of persecution there is little evidence that Christianity ever had influence there

**Point:** Violence can work and that is why Satan continues to use it

- A. But there is a problem – persecution can backfire and strengthen the church instead
  - 1). In all my trips smuggling Bibles into China I can't recall meeting a half-hearted believer
  - 2). The persecution has driven game players out – what was left was pure and strong
  - 3). In this instance persecution didn't hinder the church it set it on fire - revival

**Transition:** Because of this –the devil has a “Plan B” that works more effectively many times - **MIXTURE**

- A. While murder is based on fear and violence
  - 1). Mixture is based on compromise and ease
- B. Murder is Satan's attempt to destroy the church with external forces – attacks by unbelievers etc.
  - 1). Mixture is Satan joining the church and working from within
  - 2). *He subtly weakens the church over time by mixing in the world and its ways*

## Mixture. How it works

### 1. Satan tempts leaders to water down the word

- A. Whispering to the Pastor who is serious about God's word
 

“If you really teach that truth you'll never have a large church. In fact, you'll just drive people away. Is that really what you want?”

  - 1). I hear that hissing in my ear all the time
- B. He tries to convince teachers that doctrine isn't important – tell a lot of jokes etc. Why?
  - 1). When you abandon truth all you're left to fight with is feelings, and your own weak thinking
    - a). Fight this way and your defeat is a sure thing
  - 2). We will see as we move on that every piece of the armor is built on doctrine
    - a). Therefore, if you abandon doctrine your left without any armor
 

You step onto the battlefield with no protection – easy prey for the Devil
- C. If Satan can get leadership to water down the truth they teach
  - 1). If he can get them to start trusting in worldly methods that merely entertain the flesh
 

That church and those people will be no threat to him at all – they are already defeated
- D. J.C. Ryle summed up how mixture can be more devastating than murder
 

**J. C. Ryle:** The assaults of persecution from without have never done half so much harm to the church as the rise of false doctrines within.

**Transition:** He tempts leadership to water down the word but he also moves amongst the members

### 3. He tempts the members trying to cool their love for Jesus

**He hisses** “Why be so fanatical. There's nothing wrong with just a little bit of sin. Listen, nobody's perfect right! God understands that you're too busy to read your Bible and pray. Don't worry about it. And he knows you need to sleep in on Sunday morning. Hey! You go to church now and then. That's better than most people. Great job, Hey, you're really spiritual!”

- A. Your passion just sort of flickers out as you fall asleep spiritually  
Just remember as one writer said: “When we fall asleep spiritually guess who’s rocking the cradle”
- Summary:** The devil has a plan – his end game is to destroy the church and it’s people
- A. If he can do that with murder so be it – if he can do that with mixture - fine
- Transition:** Let’s finish with looking at what is required to enjoy victory
- A. There are two conditions – we’ll see this more as we move along

## IV. THE CONDITIONS FOR VICTORY IN THE BATTLE

### 1. We must fight this war depending upon God’s strength

**Eph 6:10 (ESV)** Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might.

- A. Much teaching on spiritual warfare neglects this truth – we teach all kinds of clever techniques
- 1). Then try to apply them in our own strength – the result is always an epic failure  
**Didn’t Jesus say? John 15:5 (NIV)** ... apart from me you can do nothing.

### 2. How do I stop leaning on my own strength? I see the truth about this war

- A. ***I think correctly*** – about who my opponent is – I’m going up against angelic forces
- 1). One angel killed 185,000 Assyrian **soldiers** in one night – I don’t like my odds  
**Transition:** So I NEED help! I cannot do this alone – I’ll be slaughtered
  - 1). Now this would be horrifying if not for this next thought in thinking correctly about the war
- B. I don’t view this as a personal battle against the devil – me against him
- 1). The truth is I am a soldier of God – recruited by him – and sent into HIS WAR
  - 2). This means I will have all the necessary resources to be victorious  
**2 Cor 10:3-5 (NIV)** For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. (4) The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. (5) We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.

**Point:** I can rest in the fact that God will not send me into a war he will not equip and enable me to win

- A. God gets no glory in my defeat! Therefore he will provide what I need to be victorious

**Thought:** So there is a balance here. Need to take this war seriously – being stalked by a powerful enemy

**1 Pe 5:8 (ESV)** Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.

- A. At the same time we shouldn’t be terrified because we stand against him in God’s might  
Clothed in heavenly armor that can withstand the Devil’s heaviest blows

**Transition:** When we speak of the power available to us what do we mean? What kind of power?

- A. How does this truth bring us rest – we need to see this – and find comfort in it

### 2. The power available to us is far superior to anything available to the devil

- A. This power was on full display at the resurrection of Christ
- 1). I believe, along with many others, that the combined power of hell tried to hold him in that tomb  
They understood if he rose they were finished!
- B. Scripture says this same power is available to us now  
**Eph 1:18-20 (NIV)** I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, (19) **and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is like the working of his mighty strength, (20) which he exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead** and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms,
- 1). This power is more than enough to stand against anything the devil has to throw at us

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- 2). We wrestle against these Satanic power with *a strength already tested and proven*
    - a). The devil wants you to think you're a weakling, but nothing could be further from the truth
    - b). Romans 8:37 tells us that in Christ we are more than conquerors

**Point:** To be victorious in this battle we must enter into it in God's strength and not our own

- A. But there is one more condition to being victorious in this fight – I'll just mention it
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## **We Must Fight This Battle Clothed in The Armor God Has Provided**

**Eph 6:11 (ESV)** Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil.

### **1. We are strengthened by God to fight well and to use this armor**

- A. Without his strength we are not strong enough to be victorious  
Without the armor we enter the battle unprotected and will be easy prey

**Point:** Both are necessary – as we move on we'll look more closely at both these vital elements

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## **CONCLUSION**

### **1. We fight against an awesome foe**

- A. But we step onto the battlefield with everything we need to be victorious
- B. We fight in a power that is far superior to anything the devil has  
We fight clothed in a spiritual armor that is able to withstand his every blow

**Point:** Therefore there is no reason not to fight well and to enjoy victory in the battle

- A. As we go through this study we'll learn -how to use what has been made available