

## *Letter To The Ephesians*

### **The Enemy Of God's People**

**Scripture: Ephesians 6: 10-20**

**<sup>10</sup> Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. <sup>11</sup> Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. <sup>12</sup> For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. <sup>13</sup> Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. <sup>14</sup> Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, <sup>15</sup> and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. <sup>16</sup> In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. <sup>17</sup> Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. <sup>18</sup> And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people. <sup>19</sup> Pray also for me, that whenever I speak, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel, <sup>20</sup> for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it fearlessly, as I should.**

In his Letters the apostle Paul speaks of the Christian life under a number of suggestive metaphors. For example, in this letter to the Ephesians his favorite designation of the Christian is how he should LIVE - compare 2: 2; 4: 1 and 17; 5: 2, 8 and 15. In chapters 5 and 6, *wives* (5: 22-24), *husbands* (5: 25-31), *children* (6: 1-3), *fathers* (6: 4), *servants* (6: 5-8) and *masters* (6: 9), are told how to live and how to behave. But suddenly the apostle changes the metaphor, and in chapter 6, verse 10, he introduces us to something of the stern side of the Christian life; he tells us that there is a fight to be fought, that we have a powerful enemy to face, and that we can only be "more than conquerors" (Romans 8: 37) as we "put on the full armor of God."

As Christians, we are *saints* (Ephesians 1: 1), *children* (1: 5), *believers* (1: 13), *servants* (6: 5) - but we are also *soldiers* (6: 11), and compare 2 Timothy 2: 3-4, and as soldiers we are in a great conflict and have to fight (1 Timothy 6: 12; 2 Timothy 4: 7). We, as believers, are engaged in a WARFARE.

In order that we may appreciate the necessity of putting on the whole armor of God if we are to be victorious soldiers in God's army, let us first consider the nature of the conflict, then the character of the enemy, and finally, the secret of victory.

## 1. THE NATURE OF THE CONFLICT

- **It is a real warfare.** It is a literal fight against a literal enemy. Notice the word "against" occurs six times in verses 11 and 12.
- **It is a conflict between real antagonists.** Who are they? "The Lord" (6: 10), and "the Devil" (6: 11). The soldiers, or allies, of the Lord are the believers in Christ. Notice the word 'our' in verse 12, which refers to the saints. The allies of Satan are also mentioned in verse 12.
- **It is a fierce conflict.** Ponder verse 12, and see how deadly a fight it is!
- **It is a hand-to-hand conflict.** It is as literal as any battle against "flesh and blood", but it is ten thousand times more deadly (verse 12), for it is a conflict not with the human and visible, but with the superhuman and invisible (Luke 12: 4-5).

This is not far-fetched or fanciful, but it is God's revealed truth. Let us accept it, for only by so doing shall we be fortified for the fray and spurred on to "put on the full armor of God" (verse 11).

## 2. THE CHARACTER OF THE ENEMY

- **He is a real person.** The names given to Satan indicate personality, and the actions attributed to him imply personality: deceiver, liar, murderer, accuser, tempter, prince, etc. Look up the following: Job 1: 6; Isaiah 14: 12; Matthew 4: 10; 6: 13; 9: 34; 10:25; 25:41; Luke 4: 12; John 8: 44 and 12: 31; 2 Corinthians 2: 11; 1 Thessalonians 2: 18 and 3: 5; and 2 Thessalonians 2: 9-11.
- **He occupies an exalted position.** He is "the ruler of the kingdom of the air" (Ephesians 2: 2), indicating his control over evil spirits; and he is "the prince of this world" (John 12: 31; 14:30; 16: 11), showing his domination in the lives of "those who are disobedient" (Ephesians 2: 2). He has a "kingdom" (Matthew 12: 26); he is "the god of this age" (2 Corinthians 4: 4); and he counterfeits true Christianity (1 Corinthians 10: 20-21; 2 Corinthians 11: 14; 1 Timothy 4: 1 and Revelation 2: 9).
- **He is very powerful.** His power is subtle (2 Corinthians 11: 14); sinister (Colossians 1: 13); supernatural (2 Thessalonians 2:9) and destructive (Hebrews 2: 14) - and compare Acts 26:18.

### 3. THE SECRET OF VICTORY

- **We must recognize our Standing in Christ.** Study verse 10, and notice that we are only strong "in the Lord". There is no strength or ability to wage this warfare apart from the strength which is ours in Him. We are to stand and withstand, not in our own strength, but in His (verses 11, 13 and 14).
- **We must accept our Protection from Christ.** This protection, provided by Him for our use, is "the full armor of God" (verses 11 and 13), five pieces being for defensive warfare, and one only for offensive warfare. There is no protection for the back because (to change the figure) - Luke 9: 62! Our part is to "put on" these pieces - verse 11.
  - **The belt of truth(14).** As the belt encompassed the waist of the soldier, so truth must encompass our whole life (Psalm 51: 6; John 8: 32; 3 John 4). There must be no hypocrisy, unreality, insincerity or compromise.
  - **The breastplate of righteousness (14).** This covers very vital organs. We must stand firm in Christ who is our righteousness, and we must be righteous in our life (i.e. right).
  - **The shoes of preparation (15).** When tempted and tried, we are sustained by the experience of Philippians 4: 7 and Isaiah 26: 3.
  - **The shield of faith (16).** Just as a shield can protect each part of the body, so faith must operate in respect to each part of our life.
  - **The helmet of salvation (17).** An unprotected mind is a ready prey to Satan's deceptions, delusions and defilements.
  - **The sword of the Spirit (17).** Compare Matthew 4: 4, 7 and 10 - "It is written..." - and Hebrews 4: 12.
- **We must maintain our Communion with Christ** (verse 18). This is essential for victory - "All prayer, at all seasons, with all perseverance."

Soldiers of Christ, arise,  
And put your armor on,  
Strong in the strength which God supplies  
Through His eternal Son.