

EPHESIANS – FACT SHEET 10



The Battle – the Big Picture:

From the very first chapter, the Apostle Paul has lifted our spirits, detailing the 'heights' of our pre-destined adoption and redemption through Christ; in addition reminding us of our new status 'in the heavenlies'. Paul has detailed to us, God's plan to '..bring all things together under one head, even Christ' (Eph 1:10), to create His 'new society' that is hallmarked by 'new standards' of unity and purity as they meet together. In addition, these 'new standards' are to be transformed into 'new relationships' within our marriages, families and work places. These three 'stress' areas are those where we will most clearly demonstrate the transforming power of Christ in us.

This all said, Paul now needs to remind us that we have an enemy, the devil; who is opposed to everything that is good and that is God's. Whilst God's purpose is to create a new society, the devil's is to destroy it. Whilst Christ had destroyed the 'dividing wall of hostility' between humans, the devil schemes to re-build them. Whilst God's desire is for His gathered people to demonstrate transforming harmony and purity – the devil's is to scatter seeds of discord and sin.

To fight such a formidable spiritual enemy, we need spiritual armoury; and so in this his final section, the Apostle exhorts us to 'put on the full armour of God' (Eph 6:11) that we might be able to 'stand' against Satan's wily schemes.

Chapter 6: 10-24

Knowing whom our Struggle is against:

The Apostle makes it very clear in this section, that our battle is not an earthly one; against 'flesh and blood' (vs 12), but rather is against the, 'rulers...authorities..the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms' (vs 12). These forces can be described as:

- Cunning (devil's schemes – vs 11)
- Powerful (vs 12)
- Wicked/Evil (vs 12)

It is against such forces that we 'struggle' (translated 'wrestle' – like hand to hand combat – it's personal!).

Knowing how we can Stand:

In order to stand against such formidable opposition; we are instructed to do two things:

- To 'be strong in the Lord and in His mighty power' (vs 10)
- To 'put on the full armour of God' (vs 11 & 13)

This gives us a balanced picture of ourselves in divine co-operation, co-fighters with the Lord Himself. It is His power and strength that we fight in, but it is US who are called to 'put on the full armour'.

In verses 13-17, the Apostle gives us an inventory of our armour:

- The belt of truth (14) – holding everything up should be a mixture of us being grounded in the truth of the doctrines we know and love; in addition to a 'life of truth' lived out to demonstrate how they 'work';
- Breastplate of righteousness (14) – is our protection, our secure position of righteousness before the throne. In such a confident position, knowing our captain, we can confidently fight;
- Gospel feet – (15) – allow us to march forward with the Gospel which is the 'power unto salvation' (Rom 1:16) – against which the enemy cannot stand;
- Shield of faith (16) – extinguishes the frequent 'fiery darts' of self doubt, guilt and disobedience;
- Helmet of salvation (17) – our assurance that we are 'in Christ', a knowledge of our security in Him;
- Sword of the Spirit (17) – the Word of God - used both for defence and attack.

Each piece has extreme value and purpose in the fight; and so we are to put the 'full' armour on. Any piece omitted will make a soldier of Christ vulnerable. Wearing such armour will enable the believer to 'stand' in the battle. Four times (vs 11, 13 x 2, 14), the Apostle exhorts us to 'stand'.

Underpinning all of this, is powerful pray that is 'in the Spirit' (vs 18). Verse 18 gives us an all embracing prayer – revealing prayer in the Spirit that is to be:

- On 'all' occasions
- With 'all' kinds of prayers
- With 'all' perseverance (always)
- For 'all' the saints

With the Sword 'of' the Spirit; and praying 'in' the Spirit – God's people will be a force to be reckoned with.

Further Study:

Satan, Principalities, Powers, Angels:

Proof of existence – Bible assumes their existence throughout and ascribes them real personality: 2 Sam 14:20, Matt 24:36, Jude 6, Rev 14:10

Some are good, holy & elect: Mark 8:38, Luke 9:26, 2 Cor 11:14, 1 Tim 5:21, Rev 14:10

Others are fallen from their original state: John 8:44, 2 Peter 2:4, Jude 6

Classes of Angels: Bible speaks of Cherubim who reveal the power, majesty & glory of God & guard His holiness in the temple & garden of Eden: Gen 3:24, Ex 25:18, 2 Sam 22:11, Psalm 18:10, 99:1, Isaiah 37:16. Seraphim are only mentioned in: Isaiah 6:2, 3,6 – they stand as servants around the throne of the heavenly King & sing His praises. They “prepare men for the proper approach to God” (Berkhof – Systematic Theology). The general ranks of angels are referred to as principalities, powers, thrones, dominions (Eph 1:21, 3:10, Col 1:16, 2:10, 1 Peter 3:22).

Named Angels: Two angels are mentioned by name: Gabriel (Dan 8:16, 9:21, Luke 1:19,26). The second is Michael (Dan 10:13, 21, Jude 9, Rev 12:7).

Jesus & Apostles approach: Matt 26:53, Mark 12:25, Luke 15:10, Luke 16:22

Their creation: Colossians 1:16 (remember all was originally ‘very good’)

Their defeat at the cross: Colossians 2:15, Romans 8:38, 1 Peter 3:22

Satan: The bible introduces him/his activity in Gen 3:1-5. Prior to this, everything was made ‘very good’ (Gen 1:31). Between these verses, some of the angels rebelled (2 Peter 2:4, Jude 6). Some scholars see a reference to the fall of Satan (the head of the rebellion) in Isaiah 14:12-15. Satan is the personal name of the head of the demons – mentioned in Job 1:6. He is also seen inciting David toward the end of his life (1 Chron 21:1). The Hebrew translation for Satan means “adversary”.

Other names used in scripture: Devil (Matt 4:1, 13:39, 25:41, Rev 12:9,20:2), the serpent (Gen 3:1, 14, 2 Cor 11:3, Rev 12:9, 20:), Beelzebul (Matt 10:25, 12:24, 27, Luke 11:15), the ruler of this world (John 12:31, 14:30, 16:11), the prince of the power of the air (Eph 2:2), the evil one (Matt 13:19, 1 John 2:13), the accuser (Rev 12:10).

“Open my eyes that I may see wonderful things in your Word” Psalm 119:18