

Ephesians 6:10-24

With this lesson, we have come to the end of our study of the book of Ephesians.

And what a panoramic view has been spread out before us.

It began with **"spiritual blessings in heavenly places,"** and will end with **"spiritual wickedness in high places."**

Or to be more specific, it began with our discovery that **"the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ"** has **"blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ."**

And wouldn't it be reasonable to assume that such wealth in Christ should affect our walk in Christ?

Well, yes, it should.

And, in fact, that's what Chapter 5 and part of Chapter 6 is all about.

It's about our day-to-day living in what we might call our physical environment.

And then, as we conclude Chapter 6, we returned once again to the spiritual, but this time in quite a different sense.

Yes, this time we will be confronted with an unseen spiritual kingdom that we'd rather not think about, but it is a kingdom that is very real.

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As you're probably aware, science fiction writers like to speculate on the awful consequences of aliens invading our planet.

Of course, that's just fiction, but, in actual fact, a very similar invasion has already taken place.

You see, behind the more obvious news headlines that tell of the world in

chaos, there is another unseen world influencing the affairs of men.

That's what Paul is going to talk about in the remainder of this chapter, beginning at Ephesians Chapter 6 and verse 10.

"Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.

11: Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

12: For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places."

Yes, there's an unseen world out there, and it's bent on our destruction.

And there's a powerful angel at the head of this very evil empire, who, by the way,

is described in detail by the prophet Ezekiel.

Turn with me then to Ezekiel 28:12-15 **"Son of man, take up a lamentation upon the king of Tyrus, and say unto him, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Thou sealest up the sum, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty.**

13: Thou hast been in Eden the garden of God; every precious stone was thy covering, the sardius, topaz, and the diamond, the beryl, the onyx, and the jasper, the sapphire, the emerald, and the carbuncle, and gold: the workmanship of thy tabrets and of thy pipes was prepared in thee in the day that thou wast created.

14: Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth; and I have set thee so: thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou

hast walked up and down in the midst of
the stones of fire.

**15: Thou wast perfect in thy ways from
the day that thou wast created, till
iniquity was found in thee."**

As we read V 12, we get the impression that
Ezekiel's prophecy is being addressed to
the earthly king of Tyrus (or Tyre.)

However, as we read on (and as is often the
case in prophecy) we discover there's a
deeper meaning.

For instance, V 13 says of this individual -
-- **"Thou hast been in Eden the garden of
God."**

And, of course, that couldn't be true of the
king of Tyre, or any other earthly king,
for that matter.

But it was true of Satan.

In fact, his entire interview with Eve is
recorded in Genesis Chapter 3.

So, it seems quite obvious that Satan is the individual being referred to here.

However, Ezekiel's description doesn't seem to match the Satan we've heard about.

Well, no, it doesn't.

Actually, it describes a richly attired angel who is identified in V 15 as **"the anointed cherub that covereth."**

So, how can we put these two things together?

Well, we can only do it by acknowledging the fact that the exalted angel described in these verses, and Satan, are one and the same person.

Our clue is found in V 15, where we read ---
"Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee."

And what was the iniquity that so drastically changed this angel's status?

It was nothing less than his rebellion
against the very God Who had created him.
And his motives are recorded in Isaiah
14:13-14--- **"For thou hast said in thine
heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will
exalt my throne above the stars of God: I
will sit also upon the mount of the
congregation, in the sides of the north:
14: I will ascend above the heights of
the clouds; I will be like the most
High."**

Once again it would appear this prophecy was
addressed to an earthly king (in this
case the King of Babylon) but once again
it has a deeper meaning.

Yes, it is much more concerned with Satan's
evil ambitions.

And not only did he rebel against God, but
he persuaded a great many angels to
follow him.

Well, Satan's rebellion was overthrown, and he, along with his followers, was cast down to the earth.

And it's interesting to note that these same two prophets, namely, Ezekiel and Isaiah, make reference to his fall.

Ezekiel 28:17 **"I will cast thee to the ground, I will lay thee before kings, that they may behold thee,"** and again, in Isaiah 14:12, **"How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations!"**

And we even have an eyewitness account!

In Luke 10:18, we find our Lord Jesus telling His no doubt astonished disciples, **"I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven."**

And, unfortunately, that's why Satan was able to access the Garden of Eden and

continue his rebellion through Adam and Eve.

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Well, there's a great deal more that could be said on the subject, but the bottom line is, there's a kingdom of darkness on this earth, and it's headed up by a very intelligent and powerful fallen angel. Yes, Satan is powerful, but he's not all-powerful.

And he is smart, but he's not all knowing. And he does make mistakes.

No doubt his biggest one was at Calvary. And he can move about very rapidly, but unlike God, he's not omnipresent.

Or, in other words, he can only be at one place at a time.

Nevertheless, his vast organization of fallen angels is quite capable of keeping him posted on world events.

And that's the mighty kingdom that Paul is referring to in Ephesians 6:12 when he talks about principalities and powers, and when he refers to the rulers of the darkness of this world, and spiritual wickedness in high places.

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So, to make a long story short, the war that began in heaven continues to be waged on earth.

And, as is the case in any conflict, there are two sides.

There are the soldiers of Jesus Christ under their heavenly Joshua, and there are Satan's evil hosts.

And, of course, as is the case in any war, it consists of holding ground and taking new territory.

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First of all, let's look at God's provision for holding our ground.

Actually, it is the Lord's strength, not ours, which gives us the ability to stand up to Satan.

That's why Ephesians 6:10 tells us to **"be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might."**

And even though he can roar like a lion, we must always remember that Satan is a defeated foe.

His pivotal defeat came at Calvary, where, according to God's promise in Genesis 3:15, His Son would bruise Satan's head, while Satan would only bruise His heel.

Nevertheless, we are no match for this formidable enemy, and can only stand our ground in the strength of **"the Lord, and in the power of his might."**

And that's why Ephesians 6:11-12 also admonishes us to **"Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.**

12: For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places."

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I'm sure many of you realize that Paul wrote this epistle during his imprisonment in Rome.

He would be surrounded by Roman soldiers, and chained to one of them most of the time.

So, no doubt, just as his Lord used the familiar things around Him, such as the lilies of the field and the familiar sheepfold, so Paul, under the inspiration

of the Holy Spirit, would have used the armour his guards wore to illustrate his teaching.

And, in fact, that's exactly what we see in Ephesians 6:13-17--- **"Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.**

14: Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness;

15: And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace;

16: Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.

17: And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God."

So, basically, a Christian has two responsibilities.

He must put on God's protection, and he must hold his ground.

So then, he must begin by having his **"loins girt about with truth."**

I want you to picture a man with a long flowing robe.

In such a garment, he would be perfectly comfortable when at leisure.

However, in preparing for battle, he must bind that robe about him with a girdle (or a belt) or it will hamper his movements.

Next, I would like you to envision that long flowing robe as our wandering thoughts.

Such thoughts must be girded **"about with truth,"** or they will bring about our downfall.

Yes, as 1 Peter 1:13 puts it, you must **"gird up the loins of your mind."**

Or as II Corinthians 10:5 admonishes us, we must bring **"into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ."**

If our minds are not girded **"about with truth,"** we will be no match for the enemy.

If they're not disciplined by God's Word, they will fall victim to our fleshly desires, or be **"tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine."**

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And then, we must be careful to put on **"the breastplate of righteousness."**

Scripture talks about two kinds of righteousness.

There's our own personal righteousness,
which God has repeatedly told us is
unacceptable in His sight.

And yet that's the righteousness many people
mistakenly rely upon to get them to
heaven.

And then there's Christ's righteousness, the
only hope of the believer.

That's the righteousness that was put on our
account when Christ was made "**sin for us,
who knew no sin; that we might be made
the righteousness of God in him.**" II

Corinthians 5:21

Yes, Christ's righteousness makes us
acceptable in God's sight.

It's not our personal righteousness, it's
our positional righteousness.

However, Christ's personal righteousness is
also responsible for what we might call
our practical righteousness.

As we allow the Holy Spirit to make us more like Christ, we become the beneficiaries of a practical day-by-day righteousness that can guard our hearts.

And I'm quite certain that's what Paul was referring to when he spoke about the **"breastplate of righteousness."**

Yes, it's that wonderful breastplate that protects our hearts.

And that's so important, isn't it?

As Proverbs 4:23 admonishes us, we're to keep our **"heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life."**

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And it's interesting to note that some of this armour Paul mentions is linked with Israel's Messiah in the Old Testament Scriptures.

Isaiah 59:16-17 **"And he saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no**

intercessor: therefore his arm brought salvation unto him; and his righteousness, it sustained him.

17: For he put on righteousness as a breastplate, and an helmet of salvation upon his head; and he put on the garments of vengeance for clothing, and was clad with zeal as a cloke."

So then, if Israel's Messiah, Who, of course, is our Lord Jesus Christ, put on such armour, we can do no better than follow His example.

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And then Ephesians 6:15 tells us our feet should be

"--- shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace."

Certainly feet speak of going, and in Matthew 28:19, every Christian has been given his marching orders---**"Go ye**

**therefore, and teach all nations,
baptizing them in the name of the Father,
and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."**

And not only should we go, but we should be prepared.

Our feet should be shod with the

"preparation of the gospel of peace."

Yes, you should be able to give **"a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear."**

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However, in this particular passage, Paul is talking about warfare, and he is talking about holding our ground.

We are to **"stand against the wiles of the devil,"** and **"having done all, to stand."**

Now, in the case of a Roman soldier, all of his protection would be fruitless if he lost his footing.

He must have shoes that will allow him to dig in.

And it is the same with a Christian.

If we are going to stand against the wiles of the devil, we must have our feet firmly planted on a solid foundation.

And you can't find a more solid foundation than the Word of God.

For instance, when Satan tries to upset our faith, we can stand on the finished work of Christ.

And when he tries to eliminate our Creator with his worldly theory of evolution, we can stand on the book of Genesis.

Yes, we must have our **"feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace,"** and we must stand our ground.

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Ephesians 6:16: **"Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be**

able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked."

A Roman shield was big enough to cover the soldier's entire body.

And if a row of soldiers stood side by side, they could lock their shields to form an almost impregnable wall of iron.

In the case of a Christian, I believe **"the shield of faith"** is his complete confidence in his Heavenly Father.

It's when you **"Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding."** Proverbs 3:4

And, of course, Satan's fiery darts must be the many temptations he can hurl at us.

In 1 John 2:16, his arsenal is divided into three categories.

"For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and

**the pride of life, is not of the Father,
but is of the world."**

In the Garden of Eden, each of these
categories are evident.

First of all, we can see the **"the lust of
the flesh."**

Yes, **"the woman saw that the tree was good
for food."**

No doubt it made her mouth water.

Then there was **"the lust of the eyes."**

Its fruit was---**"pleasant to the eyes."**

So, why should something that looked so good
be forbidden?

And finally there was **"the pride of life."**

It was **"a tree to be desired to make one
wise."**

But you know, her real problem wasn't the
forbidden fruit.

It was her absolute neglect of **"the shield
of faith."**

She had simply abandoned her confidence in God.

When Satan said **"Ye shall not surely die,"** she believed him, not God.

And she believed Satan when he accused God of ulterior motives.

"For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil."

And the moment she let down her **"shield of faith,"** she became an easy target.

So then, what about us?

When the going gets tough, do we confidently hide behind our **"shield of faith,"** or do we lose faith in God?

Don't forget, if we drop our shield and run, we expose our unprotected backs to the enemy.

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And then Ephesians 6:17 tells us to “---**take the helmet of salvation.**”

Certainly warfare is about weapons and brute force, but it is also about the mind.

Nations go to war against nations because their citizens have opposing ideas.

And Satan is acutely aware of the importance of the mind.

And II Corinthians 4:4 tells us, “**the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.**”

Yes, Satan will do everything he can to turn us away from “**the glorious gospel of Christ.**”

And more precisely, he blinds their minds concerning Christ Himself.

He denies His deity, His manhood, and, of course, His mission.

And one of the lies he has honed to perfection is the theory that there are many ways to heaven.

Yes, Satan understands the importance of the mind.

However, that is also very true of our Heavenly Father.

Certainly, He is concerned with our hearts, but He doesn't neglect our minds.

For instance, in Isaiah 1:18 we read these words --- **"Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool."**

And in Acts 17:2, concerning His faithful servant Paul, we read---**"And Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and three sabbath days reasoned with them out of the scriptures."**

So then, our minds are important.

And we must surround them with God's Word.

We must put on "**the helmet of salvation**" to protect them from the false doctrines and the evil philosophies that Satan will place in our way.

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And then Ephesians 6:17 speaks of "**the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.**"

Typically, an outstanding warrior will have a weapon of choice.

That's where his expertise lies, and that's the one he depends on.

Well, the Holy Spirit's weapon of choice is "**the word of God.**"

And it is also the only weapon our Lord Jesus used during His temptations in the wilderness.

Time after time He struck back with the words---"**It is written, Man shall not**

live by bread alone, but by every word
that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."

"---it is written, Thou shalt worship the
Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou
serve."

"It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt
the Lord thy God."

We can do no better than follow His example.
However, as formidable as this weapon is, it
is only useful if we know how to use it.
How can we say "**it is written**" if we don't
know what is written?

We must memorize it, meditate upon it, and
become skilled in its use.

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So far, we have been talking about defensive
warfare, and, of course, that's very
important.

However, God also expects us to be on the
offensive.

He expects us to be taking ground.

And not only can **"the sword of the Spirit"** defend us, it is absolutely essential when advancing on the enemy.

But sadly, too many Christians are not involved in taking ground.

They're like the children of Israel who spent their life wandering in the wilderness.

And why did that first generation spend the rest of their life in the wilderness when they should have been enjoying the Promised Land?

Hebrews 3:19 puts it in a nutshell---"**So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief.**"

Yes, in spite of Caleb's encouragement to **"go up at once, and possess it,"** they rebelled.

And oh what a fuss they made!

Numbers 14:1-2 **"And all the congregation lifted up their voice, and cried; and the people wept that night.**

2: And all the children of Israel murmured against Moses and against Aaron: and the whole congregation said unto them, Would God that we had died in the land of Egypt! or would God we had died in this wilderness!"

Believe it or not, they would sooner have lived anywhere else than in the land of milk and honey.

Oh, it was a wonderful land all right, but its inhabitants scared them to death.

In short, they didn't believe the God who had brought them out of Egypt could bring them into Canaan.

Forty years later, just before the second generation entered the land, the truth finally came out.

When the spies talked to Rahab, an inhabitant of the land, they got the full story.

Joshua 2:9-11 "And she said unto the men, I know that the LORD hath given you the land, and that your terror is fallen upon us, and that all the inhabitants of the land faint because of you.

10: For we have heard how the LORD dried up the water of the Red sea for you, when ye came out of Egypt; and what ye did unto the two kings of the Amorites, that were on the other side Jordan, Sihon and Og, whom ye utterly destroyed.

11: And as soon as we had heard these things, our hearts did melt, neither did there remain any more courage in any man, because of you: for the LORD your God, he is God in heaven above, and in earth beneath."

So then, when did God dry up the waters of
the Red sea?

Well, it was when they came out of Egypt.
And what effect did it have on their enemy?
Their hearts melted, and there remained no
more courage in any man.

Bottom line:

Israel had been held up by a defeated foe.
And 1 Corinthians 10:11 makes it clear that
**"all these things happened unto them for
ensamples: and they are written for our
admonition."**

Isn't that right?

So then, what should their experience teach
us?

It should teach us that God is well able to
give us our Promised Land.

And what does the Promised Land symbolize in
the life of a Christian?

It's a picture of our victorious life in Christ.

Yes, it's the place where the soldiers of Jesus Christ follow their heavenly Joshua.

It's the place where we can be victors, not victims.

Oh, I'm not denying the fact that Canaan could be a picture of heaven, but more accurately, I believe it represents our victorious life in Christ.

After all, when we get to heaven, we're not going to find a hostile enemy marshalling its forces to keep us out.

But down here, we will encounter principalities and powers who will do their best to us keep us out of our rightful possession in Christ.

So then, Israel's experience was written for our admonition, and I'm sure it cannot be improved upon.

However, if you will permit me, I would like to add this little illustration that has been running around in my mind, and I hope it will be helpful.

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In my imagination, we are looking down on a magnificent mansion that is surrounded by beautiful grounds.

The hedges are trimmed, the flower gardens are well cared for, and the grass is neatly cut.

Well, most of the grass is neatly cut.

You see, just inside the front gate, there is a patch of grass that is completely uncared for.

From this height, it is impossible to see what is in that area, but we seem to be getting closer.

Yes, now we can see it.

There's a small tent there and a young man sitting in front of it.

We can also see a few camping things scattered around him, and he seems to be cooking his supper.

We're getting quite close now, and we notice a small well-worn book in his shirt pocket.

And then our attention is drawn to the mansion.

It's starting to get dark, and a golden light streams out of every window.

And then, by this wonderful power of imagination, we are able to zoom right through one of the windows.

There's a grand party going on, and the owner, a formidable looking man, is talking to one of the guests.

As they look out the window at the beautiful grounds, the guest can't help remarking on the unsightly patch of grass by the front gate.

"I see you're still keeping that squatter out there. Why don't you evict him? You can't cut the grass, and it ruins the looks of the place."

"Oh," said the owner, "we're quite willing to leave him in peace. Did you notice that little book in his pocket when you came in?"

"To tell the truth, I didn't."

"Well, it's the deed for this whole property."

"It is? I thought you were the owner."

"Well, in practical terms, I am, but in actual fact, he is."

"Lucky for you, he's never read it!"

"Oh, he has. In fact, he reads it all the time, but he doesn't seem to have the courage to act on it.

Well, he did knock on the door some time ago and tried to come in, but I talked him down. I'm quite good at that kind of thing, you know. I told him I was the owner, and he had to leave. And he did! I have to admit he makes me nervous when he reads that book, but I guess I don't have anything to worry about. Oh yes, I'm quite willing to leave him in peace."

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Well, that's my allegory about living outside of our inheritance, and it's a problem all of us have to deal with.

Under our heavenly Joshua, we are quite able
to enter the Promised Land.

We have a victorious leader, and we are well
protected by God's armour.

And not only that, but we have been given
"the sword of the Spirit."

And yet, all too often, we find ourselves in
the ranks of the unbelieving believers,
still wandering in the wilderness.

Why are we so afraid to speak a word of hope
to the unsaved, or stand up for God's
truth?

Romans 8:37 tells us **"we are more than
conquerors through him that loved us."**

May it no longer be said of us---**"they could
not enter in because of unbelief."**

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And then Paul mentions what is undoubtedly
one of our most powerful weapons forged
against the enemy.

As William Cowper put it---"Satan trembles,
when he sees the weakest saint upon his
knees."

V 17-20 **"Praying always with all prayer and
supplication in the Spirit, and watching
thereunto with all perseverance and
supplication for all saints;**

**19: And for me, that utterance may be
given unto me, that I may open my mouth
boldly, to make known the mystery of the
gospel,**

**20: For which I am an ambassador in
bonds: that therein I may speak boldly,
as I ought to speak."**

Yes, Paul understood the power of prayer,
and he coveted their intercession on his
behalf.

And prayer is just as powerful today.

We should pray for our government, and we certainly should pray for our fellow believers.

After all, we're not wrestling against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers, and we're all in this together.

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And then, as Paul dips his pen one last time, he makes reference, no doubt, to the dear brother who would be delivering this epistle.

Ephesians 6: 21-24 **"But that ye also may know my affairs, and how I do, Tychicus, a beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord, shall make known to you all things:**

22: Whom I have sent unto you for the same purpose, that ye might know our affairs, and that he might comfort your hearts.

23: Peace be to the brethren, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

24: Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. Amen."

What a treasure has been committed to us by the Holy Spirit.

We have been made aware of our wealth in Christ, our walk in Christ, and our warfare in Christ.

And I would be so happy to simply finish this lesson with Paul's gracious words---

"Peace be to the brethren, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ."

But that's not all of the story.

You see, it wouldn't be long before the **"grievous wolves"** Paul had warned their elders about would be among them, **"not sparing the flock."**

And it wouldn't be long before some of them
would be giving heed to false doctrine.

How sad!

But it's a warning, isn't it?

We must put on the whole armour of God that
we **"may be able to stand against the
wiles of the devil."**