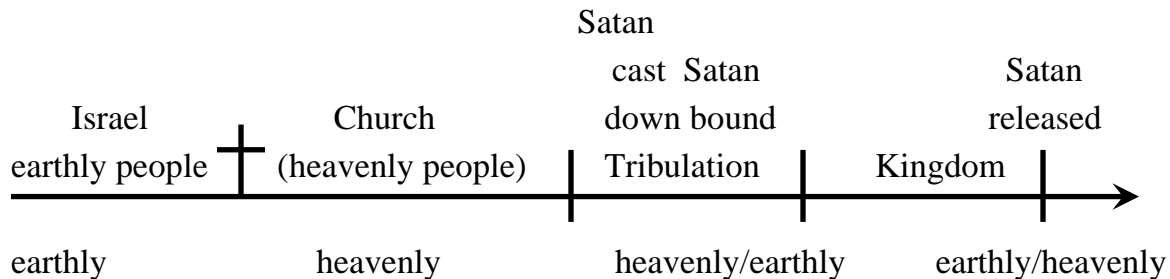


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C0521 -- May 25, 2005 – Ephesians 6:10-11 – Reality of Spiritual Warfare

Let's begin with a brief overview of military history from God's perspective. First of all there are two realms of battle: the spiritual realm and the earthly realm. There are angelic creatures in rebellion against God in the spiritual realm and there are human creatures in rebellion against God in the earthly realm. Because there is rebellion against God in both realms battles are fought in both realms. The earthly battles are being fought over a piece of real estate known as the Promised Land. The battle for this real estate involves Israel, Gentile nations and Angels. Because the battle is for a physical possession the primary agents of warfare are earthly men although these men may be demonically inspired (anti-Semitism). Israel, God's chosen people, is constantly at war defending against demonically inspired Gentile nations.



Let's back up and look at God's military strategy for Israel (Read Joshua 1:1-9). Israel was an earthly people who had earthly enemies; enemies of flesh and blood; men from Gentile nations. God, as the Great Military General, commanded the Israelites to *advance* across the Jordan and execute a series of carefully planned military strategies which would result in the utter defeat of Israel's enemies and their eternal possession of the Promised Land. However, Israel failed to faithfully execute God's military strategies and consequently never possessed the entire Promised Land. The final battle of this earthly warfare that involves Israel, Gentile nations and the Angelic realm awaits the Campaign of Armageddon where the Messiah will be victorious.

On the other hand, there is a heavenly battle being fought for the hearts and minds of earthly men (1 Cor 4:4). The battle for the hearts and minds of men involves the Church and Angels. Because the battle is for a spiritual possession the primary agents of warfare are a spiritual people and the primary enemies are fallen angels. God has already given us every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies in order to win this conflict (Eph 1:3).

This is the subject of Ephesians. Ephesians was written to the Church, not Israel. The Church is a heavenly people, a new man composed of believing Jews and Gentiles who have every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places (Eph 1:3). Our enemies are therefore heavenly, wicked spirit beings. Significantly, we are never told to *advance* as Israel was. We are not told to go out and conquer demons by exorcism, binding them, or rebuking them. We are never taught to go on the offensive. Instead we are taught to defend against them. The Church warrior is a defender not an attacker. In support of this we are told to take up the full armor of God and stand! This means we are to pick up and put on each piece of armor. Then we are to stand, that is, hold ground that has already been conquered. What ground has already been conquered? The ground of justice that frees God to justify men and give them every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies. Jesus Christ is the one who conquered this ground by His victory on the cross when “He...disarmed the rulers and authorities...having triumphed over them” making a public show of them (Col 2:15). So, here in Eph 6 we are commanded to take up the full armor of God and hold the ground which Christ conquered on the cross. That victory was the decisive military battle between God and Satan but evil still remains throughout the church age (1 Cor 15:24-28). Following the removal of the church from earth to heaven at the pre-trib Rapture, earthly and heavenly battles will escalate during the time of the Tribulation and will reach a new high when Satan is cast down to earth in the midst of the Tribulation culminating with the Battle of Armageddon. After this, God’s great adversary, Satan, will be imprisoned for 1,000 years. After the 1,000 years Satan will be released for a short time and the final battle will take place where good and evil will be permanently separated; the righteous to heavenly bliss and the wicked to eternal damnation.

Reality of Spirit World. There is a lot of confusion and ignorance of the spirit world. TV shows and news reports about ghosts, witchcraft, vampires, and overt occultic practices really only confuse and cause ignorance about spirit beings. To many, speculations about the spirit world have resulted in preoccupation with it. This has primarily come through the New Age Mysticism that has invaded America through the influx of Eastern religions such as Hinduism, Buddhism, and Taoism. These mystical religions are interestingly, highly compatible with modern evolutionary theory (cosmic evolution and macroevolution). Both believe in the gradual upward development and continuity of all

beings. Both are ancient pagan ideas contrary to the word of God. It is no wonder then that no matter which track a 21st century American follows; eastern religions or evolution, they both lead to the same conclusion: religious deception. Each uses either psychological or scientific terminology to cloak divination and religious practices. Evolution, if you haven't noticed is defended with a religious zeal unparalleled in human history. Whether evolutionists realize it or not they are involved in a polytheistic religion which deifies Chance and Upward Development. The first evolutionist was an angel originally known as Lucifer, once fallen known as Satan. Was it not Satan who first said, "I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God...I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High' (Isaiah 14:13-14). That's evolution; transmutation across established boundaries. I, a creature, will become the Creator. The religion of evolution did not come from Darwin. It came from Satan. Was it not Satan who then passed on this idea to Adam and Eve when he said..."For God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God," (Gen 3:5). See, you too can become like God; you can transmute form and function and become God. Evolution has been peddled through every generation of mankind. It is silly to think that evolution began in 1859 with Darwin's *Origin of Species*. What began then was the formal scientific terminology which supposedly cloaks it from its religious practices. But all the new terminology amounts to is a technical religious babble. Unfortunately, the evolutionary religion is being highly funded by the US government. I thought the 1st Amendment to our Constitution stated, "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion". What about the religion of secular humanism expressed in evolutionary terms in our public schools? Now this technical religious psycho-babble is being forced upon our children? A large number of Americans believe in the Darwinian theory of evolution where natural processes and random mutations are guiding the upward development of organisms under the guise of long ages of time. These people have deceived themselves. They think they are objective and scientific and not religious. Because of this they have become virtually ignorant of the spirit world which has deceived them. Contrary to their knowledge it is completely demonically inspired. Many Christians try to put evolution and creation together or simply capitulate to evolution. The universe in evolutionary terms is an impersonal place. God, if He exists is the Universe itself. Even 3rd world countries have a better understanding of the spirit world than these moderns. Tribal peoples engage heavily in spiritual practices and ritualism. Almost all tribes believe in spirit beings. The majority believe that spirit beings are behind the forces of nature. Their worldview leads to a lively and personal universe rather than an impersonal one. In this sense, pagan tribes are actually more advanced in their understanding of the universe than mainstream intellectuals because at least they have not reduced reality to a mechanical process.

I want you to see how radically opposed the Bible is to the mainstream evolutionary concept of mother nature/natural law. To do so, turn to Matt. 6:26. I want you to note how the Lord Jesus talks about natural processes; animal life, Matt. 6:30 plant life; I want you to notice that He talks about it like it's a personal process. Turn over to Matt. 8:26, this is the storm scene, read 23-26; this verb for "rebuke" is only used of persons. Why is the Lord Jesus rebuking the winds? Was He just talking to natural processes? Did He just manipulate the natural processes? Oh no, He was rebuking the delegated authorities behind the winds. He was talking to angelic personalities who have been given authority over the winds; these are not chance natural processes. There are personalities behind the forces and the tribal guy in Africa is more correct in his thinking about these forces than most western Americans. At least he recognizes that there are spiritual forces behind the physical forces. He recognizes that, but modern American's have been deceived by the spiritual forces to de-personalize the universe. We've so mechanized our thinking that we lose sight of the personal backdrop of the universe. This is evolution working its way out in the idea of man and the world as a machine.

Carnal man, deceived by the forces of darkness, will do whatever he can to depersonalize the universe. Why? Because the more we can depersonalize the universe the less we have to think about the personal God. And if we kill God then who are we responsible to?ⁱ No one. And that's what the carnal man wants; he wants a world where he's not responsible, a world where he is safe to sin without any consequences. This is what Satan wants too. He wants to be let off the hook for his sin. As Christians in a western society we have to guard against this kind of thinking. We have to guard against the ideas of natural law and impersonal processes. We have all been trained to think in mechanical, evolutionary terms and if we don't re-train ourselves to think in terms of a personal, spiritual universe then we will never even realize we are in the middle of a vast spiritual warfare. If I were a demon and I wanted to distract humans so I could deceive them I would feed them the idea that the spirit world doesn't exist, that the universe is just a set of natural mechanical processes. Do you see how poisonous that idea is? This is why we have to get back to the Bible. Because in reality, back behind the so-called natural laws of the universe there are angelic beings who are carrying out specific functions. Some are messengers, some are guardian angels, some are in charge of what we often think of as natural processes, but these are actually very personal processes. Angels can interact with the natural order (Gen 6:2; Rev 9:15), they can eat (Ps 78:5), they can speak to men (Gen 19:1-2), they execute the judgments of God on earth (Matt 13:29, 41, 49), they guard people (Matt 18:10), and they can be seen by men on occasion (John 20:12). It seems to be the clear teaching of Scripture that if we could just tear back the sky and peer into the fifth dimension we would see a

huge traffic jam of angels engaged in all sorts of activities (Isa. 34:4; Eph. 3:10; Rev. 6:14-16). We are not alone.

The Ephesians were very aware of the spirit world. They worshipped the Greek goddess Artemis before they became Christians. Magic was big business and was closely tied to pagan worship at the Temple of Artemis. They had once relied on Artemis for protection but now, as ambassadors of Jesus Christ, they must realize that she was not their protector but a destroyer. Their protection against Satan and the demons must now come from the spiritual armor that God provides.

Finally, be strengthened in the Lord, that is, in the might of His strength. Put on all the armor of God, in order that you might have the ability to stand against the strategies of the devil: because our struggle is not against flesh and blood but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers of this darkness, against the spiritual beings of evil in the heavenlies. For this reason, take up all the armor of God, in order that you (all) may be able to stand in the day of evil and having done everything, to stand.

Greek Text 6:10 Tou/ loipou/(evndunamou/sqe evn kuri,w/ kai. evn tw// kra,tei th/j ivscu,oj auvtou/Å

Translation 6:10 Finally, be strengthened in the Lord, that is, in the might of His strength.

Finally, signals that the following words are Paul's closing comments. Paul has been telling us how to **walk: walk in unity, walk in holiness, walk in love, walk in light, and walk in wisdom.** Now he no longer tells us how to walk but how to **stand.** Note we are to **stand!** This is not an offensive strategy but a defensive one! We are not to exorcise, bind or rebuke demons. Christ has already conquered the territory, we are called to hold the territory that He has already conquered. We are not called to advance as a military unit but to guard the conquered region. Satan wants to infiltrate this ground and he uses highly developed strategies to do so.

Christians can compromise their position on the battlefield and open up a position of attack for Satan. For example, in Eph 4:25-26 we were commanded to "be angry and yet not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger and do not give the devil an opportunity (*topos*)."

Whenever you harbor anger for more than 24 hours you give the devil a position of attack against Christ's territory. You weaken the line of defense and the devil attacks the sheep

trying to divide the sheep and destroy their witness. We are told not to give the devil a place of attack. Instead we are told that “your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour” (1 Pt 5:8). So, our job is simply to hold the ground that Christ has already conquered. We are not to give one inch or take one inch. Christ already won the decisive battle at the cross. We are simply to maintain it through His strength and provision.

This is why Paul says **be strengthened in the Lord. be strengthened** is a present passive imperative. This means you are responsible to **be continually strengthened**. The source of the strengthening is **the Lord**. He provides the strength to hold the ground (cf Eph 3:16). We cannot hold the ground in our own strength; we must continually be operating in His strength.

The word **and** should be translated **that is** because what follows is an explanation for the phrase **be strengthened in the Lord. be strengthened in the Lord, that is, in the strength of His might**. The words **strength of His might** have already been used in Eph 1:19. There these words were used of God the Father; here they are used of Christ. The word **strength** is *kratos* (Lk. 1:51; Acts 19:20; Eph. 1:19; 6:10; Col. 1:11; 1 Tim. 6:16; Heb. 2:14; 1 Pet. 4:11; 5:11; Jude 1:25; Rev. 1:6; 5:13) and always refers to supernatural power directed toward a goal. Christ has the goal of defending His territory and the members of the Church are His soldiers. The second word **might** is *ischus* (Mk. 12:30, 33; Lk. 10:27; Eph. 1:19; 6:10; 2 Thess. 1:9; 1 Pet. 4:11; 2 Pet. 2:11; Rev. 5:12; 7:12). *ischus* refers to inherent strength, whether of God, angels, or men. So, *ischus* refers to Christ’s inherent strength and *kratos* refers to the demonstration of His strength. To give you the relationship between these two words I give you the example of Arnold Schwarzenegger. The sight of his body reveals inherent strength, but when you see Him curl 250 pounds that strength is being demonstrated. In Eph 1:19 God has inherent strength and that strength was demonstrated by resurrecting Christ from the dead (reversing entropy). Here we learn that Christ also has both inherent strength and that He demonstrates this strength by enabling His soldiers to stand against the strategies of the devil, the topic of verse 11

Greek Text 6:11 *evndu,sasqe th.n panopli,an tou/ qeou/ pro.j to. du,nasqai u`ma/j sth/nai pro.j*

ta.j meqodei,aj tou/ diabo,lou

Translation 6:11 Put on all the armor of God, in order that you might have the ability to stand against the strategies of the devil:

Verse 11 is describing how we can be strengthened by the inherent strength of the Lord. We are strengthened by **putting on the full armor of God**. The word **full armor** is *panoplia* and literally means “all armor”. **Put on all the armor of God**. A soldier who is only partially armed is open to being wounded or killed but a fully armed soldier is able to hold his ground **against the** enemy. In this verse the enemy is identified as **the devil** himself. The armor of God is what gives us **the ability to stand**. Without it you will fall to the schemes of the devil. The function of the armor is so that we can **stand**. The word for **stand** (*histemi*) means “to offer resistance”. One who **stands** is not pushed around but holds his ground. The armor is not for attacking but for resisting. What are we to resist? NASB says **against the schemes of the devil**. The word **schemes** is *methodeia* from which means “methods” or “strategies”. The **full armor of God** provides the **ability to resist the** deceitful **strategies of the devil**. First let’s deal with our adversary and then with three of his strategies.

Our Adversary: The Devil. The word **devil** is *diabolos* from which we get the word “diabolic”. He is a “diabolic” and real character. Before he was known as *diabolos* he was known as Lucifer, a creation of God, originally full of wisdom and beauty. He was, in fact, the most beautiful creation and he led the music in heaven (now I think he leads most of it on earth). He was blameless in all his ways until unrighteousness was found in Him (Ezek 28). Because of the abundance of his beauty he was soured by the sins of pride and exaltation and now he is internally filled with violence. Jesus mentioned the fact that the devil was a murderer from the beginning. He murdered the spiritual and physical life of Adam and Eve through diabolic deception so that the whole human race is under sin. Jesus says that whenever the devil lies he speaks from his own nature and that he is the father of all lies (John 8:44). John identifies him as the deceiver who deceives the whole world (Rev 12:9). So, he is a terrible and powerful fallen angel. Day and night he accuses Christians in the high court of God and he presently roars about as a lion seeking to destroy Christians. Knowledge of the devil’s diabolic nature gives us some indication of his three strategies of attack.

3 Basic Strategies of the Devil. The first basic strategy of the devil is “false doctrine” or the spreading of “lies”. He is the father of lies so we should not be surprised that he uses this strategy. The devil uses worldly philosophies to infiltrate (HVP). It is apparent that some of the founders of certain philosophies were strongly influenced by Satan. A recent point of infiltration was through a professing Christian, Soren Kierkegaard (1813-1855). Kierkegaard, a Danish existentialist, is known as “the father of all modern thinking”, both secular and theological thinking. Kierkegaard’s studies of Abraham and Isaac brought about his conclusion that Abraham’s sacrifice of Isaac was an act of faith without any

rational reason. Out of this came the common slogan, “a leap of faith” which is a phrase which signifies the total separation of the rational and faith. Faith sits in an upper story so that if man wants to deal with the really important things such as love, purpose, or meaning he must abandon all rationality and make a gigantic, irrational leap of faith.

Upper Story	Faith, Love, Meaning	Irrationality
Lower Story	Reason, Logic, Evidence	Rationality

What Kierkegaard failed to do was read the story of Abraham and Isaac carefully. Abraham did not make a “leap of faith” at all when he offered Isaac as a sacrifice. God had propositionally revealed Himself to Abraham on numerous occasions. God had made promises to him and had fulfilled those promises. Abraham had every reason to trust God totally and therefore his offering of Isaac did not abandon rationality but was firmly based on it. “The important thing about him is that when he put forth the concept of a leap of faith, he became in a real way the father of all modern existential thought, both secular and theological.” When he separated faith from rationality he denied that there was any reasonable explanation for reality. He denied that there was any uniform field of knowledge that rationally made sense of all the details of life. This is why existentialism, if it is to find meaning to life at all must find it in human experience; experiences that we create and which are unable to be communicated to others. We become the authors of meaning and purpose. Ultimately this leads to New Age Mysticism. This is totally contrary to the word of God which is a propositional revelation of God and can be communicated. God gives purpose. So, Kierkegaard is, in a very real sense, the father of all modern thinking, both secular and theological. Karl Barth was the theologian who, after WWII, introduced existentialism into theology. The psychological depression of a post-WWII America resulted in the departure from rationality and a turn toward experience. Barth said the Bible does not communicate who God is. God is beyond communication. The Bible is just another book. God is in the wholly beyond and can only be contacted through a personal non-verbal mystical encounter. Satan’s biggest strategy throughout human history has been through the propagation of false ideas or doctrines. What we know as “lies”. The direct points of attack in our present day are the public school system and the universities by which he indirectly attacks the church. These humanist institutions have become the seedbed of Satan’s deceptions. It was noted recently that 75% of College Christians faith was destroyed in their first year on the college campus.

The second strategy of Satan is “confusion”. The father of lies loves to cause confusion among believers. His first tactic in this arena is to cause confusion by ignorance of Bible

doctrine. After convincing you that Christianity is a “leap of faith” you will not think that Bible study is essential and you will be more and more confused, tossed about by every wind of doctrine. How can you stay afloat when you take an anti-intellectual approach to Christianity? How can you discern truth from error when you don’t know anything? If you’ve been taught that Christianity is just a subjective religious experience you’re not going to take the time to study the word of God. This is exactly what Satan wants. He doesn’t want you to know the word of God because he knows that when you study the word of God it gives you the ability to discern truth and escape confusion. God is the author of clarity but Satan is the author of confusion. A similar tactic under this strategy is to give you the idea that we can’t understand the word of God, that there are many interpretations to that and we just can’t know. For example, inspiration and inerrancy of Scripture, what the end-times will look like, creation vs. evolution, etc...How often have you heard believers say that we really can’t know about these issues, the Bible isn’t clear. Really? Once again, people who doubt that we can understand or know haven’t been reading the Bible very carefully. Ultimately, this tactic of Satan leads believers to acting as if “God mutters. God doesn’t speak clearly. God doesn’t know how to communicate with His creatures.” Just because professing Christians stand on opposite sides of an issue or have different views does not mean that God has not been clear. What it means is that Satan has created confusion in the church.

The third strategy is “counterfeit”. Satan is a master counterfeiter.

2 Corinthians 11:13-15 ¹³ For such men are false apostles, deceitful workers, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. ¹⁴ 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 will be according to their deeds.

People wrongly assume that Satan is a good old boy or that Satan has all the fun. Satan would like you to think that. Dr Barnhouse said,

“One of Satan’s greatest stratagems has been the attempt to keep men in ignorance of the real nature of his being and the fraudulent dimensions of his pretensions.”ⁱⁱ

Satan is a destroyer. He hates human life and He wants to murder and destroy it. Because people don’t know his real nature they make the terrible assumption that error will be obvious. But if Satan is an angel of light then this means his counterfeits look like light but are actually darkness. For example, Satan’s deceptions often come in the form of 99% truth

and 1% error. But it's that 1% that is deadly. 99.95% of rat poison is good food; it's the .05% that will kill you. This kind of counterfeit is what deceives people. So much of it sounds so good. For example, there is quite a bit of truth in Roman Catholicism but where it really counts there is error. They mix faith with works under the name of grace. They exalt Mary to the level of Co-redemptrix, and the Vicar of Christ (Christ's substitute on earth), who speaks *in cathedra* and *ex cathedra* infallibly. Roman Catholicism is a religious counterfeit. It destroys the gospel, Christ's substitutionary work on the cross, the virgin birth, the doctrine of prayer, the doctrine of grace, etc... Satan is a master counterfeiter. As always, the key to detecting the counterfeit is knowing Bible doctrine. You have to train yourself to keep your eyes on the text of Scripture. If you don't know the truth you will never be able to detect the deception. Satan has many counterfeits. God sent apostles and prophets and Satan countered by sending false apostles and prophets. God sent a by grace through faith gospel and Satan has counterfeited with numerous false gospels. Paul even foresaw this and warned against it in Gal when he said,

Galatians 1:8-9 ⁸ But even if we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to what we have preached to you, he is to be accursed! ⁹ As we have said before, so I say again now, if any man is preaching to you a gospel contrary to what you received, he is to be accursed!

God did many signs and wonders to authenticate His message and messengers and Satan countered by doing signs and wonders to deceive people (2 Thess 2:8). This will become even more deceptive during the Tribulation when Satan indwells the Antichrist and counterfeits the resurrection (Rev 13). He will also counterfeit the Trinity during the Tribulation (Rev 16:13-14). He is a master counterfeiter and the only way you will be able to detect it is to keep your eyes on the truth (e.g. Airplane Pilots and Gauges).

So, we are in a spiritual warfare. And I hope you realize that the major thrust of all of Satan's strategies is in the realm of ideas. Ideas give motivation and necessitate action. We are called to put on the full armor of God and stand against these ideas. Christ already conquered the territory and when He did so He gave us every spiritual blessing and now we are called to defend. Satan and the Demons are real beings who have highly developed military tactics operating primarily through the channel of ideas, designed to poison God's peoples and destroy God's plan.

Let's conclude with the Christians defense mechanism against Satan's strategies.

2 Corinthians 10:3-5 For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, ⁴ for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses. ⁵ *We are* destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and *we are* taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ,

The Christian defense is Christ-centered knowledge in every area of life. Operating on the principle that Christ created all, owns all, knows all, and if we are to operate correctly we have to think of all of reality in terms of Christ. With this knowledge we have the ability to destroy the speculative philosophies of the world and challenge the world with the gospel of Christ. These false ideas are viewed as fortresses and we destroy these fortresses by taking in Bible doctrine, teaching it to others, thereby spreading Christian influence.

ⁱ Nitsche.

ⁱⁱ Barnhouse, Donald Grey, *The Invisible War* (Grand Rapids, Zondervan, 1965), 156, quoted by R. B. Thieme *Satan and Demonism*, 5.

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