



Ephesians

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Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Ephesians 6:10

Paul now comes to the closing thoughts of the epistle. This is evidenced by the word “Finally.” He has presented an amazing display of the wonder of the work of Christ and how it pertains to His redeemed, but he wants them to not forget that there is still an on-going battle which is being waged.

Though the victory is assured, and though the redeemed are already saved once and for all (Ephesians 1:13, 14), and though we are even now seated in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus (Ephesians 2:6), we still have this earthly life to get through. It is one which can wear down the hardy, and it is one which can cause us to take our eyes off of the Lord.

And so, Paul now takes the time to admonish the faithful to “be strong in the Lord.” The word in Greek is in the present imperative, and so it literally reads, “be strengthened in the Lord.” It is something that we are to actively do as we live out this life. The way that we are to do this has already been given –

“...that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man,” Ephesians 3:16

It is “through His Spirit” that we can do this. Paul will explain what that means in the verses ahead. However, before getting to those verses, it can be noted that there are things which we must actively do, using the tools which the Spirit has already granted to us. If we fail to act; we will not be strengthened. In turn, our walk will be filled with trials and woes, and yet it will be a bed of our own making. This was reflected in the words of Ephesians 4:30 –

“And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.”

In the coming words of Paul, he will use terminology that is reflected in the uniform and armament of a Roman soldier. It is probable that he was being guarded by a Roman soldier as he wrote, and he looked at him and contemplated a spiritual analogy to his earthy adornment. This is similar to what David and others had done in the Old Testament.

The guards, being Roman soldiers, would be well disciplined, meticulously careful with their attire and weapons, and encouraged in what those things stood for. These implements would be their protection in battle, and it is in battle that soldiers are the most dependent on one another, even as if they were brothers by blood. This is seen in the use of the term “my brethren” while finishing his thoughts to the Ephesians.

He has told them to be strong in the Lord, but they are also to be strong “in the power of His might.” Roman soldiers were individually strong in the empire, but they were also strong as a member of the empire. In other words, an individual soldier may be strong and great in battle, but he is not disconnected from the empire he served. Likewise, we may be strong in the knowledge of the word, a great orator, or an excellent missionary, but apart from the body of Christ as a whole, we are waging a losing battle.

We are to be strong in His great power as well as strong in our individual stations within His body. The two, combined together, are what make it possible for us to endure the trials which are sure to come in this life.

Life application: The Lord has given us His word by which we can be strong in the Lord. But we also must apply that word to our lives. Knowledge without application is wasted knowledge. Let us trust in the power of the Lord to direct us in all ways, but let us also not be deficient in growing in our knowledge of Him as well.

Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.
Ephesians 6:11

In order to explain the words of the previous verse, Paul now introduces the thought of protective armament, both for offensive and defensive uses. His words were that we are to “be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might.” In order to do that, we are told to now, “Put on the whole armor of God.”

The Greek word for “whole armor” is *panoplia*. It equates directly to our modern word panoply. It is only used twice in this chapter and once in Luke 11:22. It signifies “a complete set of defensive and offensive armor (weapons), i.e. everything needed to wage successful

warfare; (figuratively) the full resources the Lord gives to the believer so they can successfully wage spiritual warfare. In this way they do not fight *for* victory – but *from His* victory!” (HELPS Word Studies).

We are to determine what the “armor of God” is, and then to adorn ourselves with it. Paul will detail and explain each implement which comprises this armor. From that, we are to pay heed to his words, applying these concepts to our spiritual lives. This “armor of God” corresponds to what he spoke of in Romans 13. First he said –

“Therefore let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light.”
-Romans 13:12

The “armor of light” is the “armor of God.” It is contrasted then to that which belongs to the devil and which belongs to darkness. In explanation of “the armor of light,” Paul continued on in Romans 13 –

“But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to *fulfill its* lusts.”
-Romans 13:14

Everything which Christ embodies and displays is what we are to pursue. His humanity was sinless and perfect; we are to pursue this. His deity is absolute holiness; we are to strive to likewise be holy. We are told to pursue Christ by adorning ourselves in His light, and adorning ourselves in what His human/divine nature signify. Paul’s instructions in this are so “that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.”

The Greek word for “wiles” is *methodeia*. It is only found here and in Ephesians 4:14 which spoke of the “deceitful plotting” of those opposed to the truth of the gospel. It indicates “a predictable (pre-set) *method* used in *organized evil-doing (well-crafted trickery)*” (HELPS Word Studies).

As a great parallel to what we are seeing in Ephesians 6, Ephesians 4 continues on with the words –

“...but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head— Christ—“ Ephesians 4:15

We are to put on the whole armor of God so that we “may grow up in all things into Him who is the head.” We cannot do this unless we are properly dressed in the armor of God in order to stand against the wiles of the devil.

What is implied in this verse is that those who do not put on the whole armor of God will not be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. Instead, they will remain “children, tossed to

and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting” (Ephesians 4:14).

Life application: In order to mature in Christ, and in order to defend against the attacks of the devil, we need to properly prepare ourselves. Paul will explain what the “whole armor of God” is in the coming verses. Let us pay heed to these words and then apply them to our lives, soberly considering that the devil is there and ready to attack us at our weakest points, and in our weakest moments.

For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual *hosts* of wickedness in the heavenly *places*. Ephesians 6:12

The Greek word for “wrestle” is found only here in the Bible. It indicates a fight, struggle, or conflict, but it is a noun, not a verb. Therefore, it more accurately reads “For our wrestling is not against...” It is a match which we are engaged in. It is active and on-going, but it is not against “flesh and blood.” Actually, in the Greek, the order is reversed. It says “blood and flesh.”

The life is in the blood, and thus without the blood, there would be no movement of the flesh. Regardless of this, we are in a wrestling match, but it is not one which is of the body against other physical bodies. In other words, even if the world is filled with people who stand against Christ and the gospel, this is not the source of the battle, and we are not actually in a war against them. Rather, the fight is against:

Principalities – The Greek is *arché*. It is a word which indicates rule, such as in a kingly or a magisterial sense. It is “properly, from the *beginning* (*temporal* sense), i.e. ‘*the initial* (starting) point’; (figuratively) what comes *first* and therefore is *chief* (foremost), i.e. has the *priority* because ahead of the rest... (HELPS WORD Studies). In other words, there is a hierarchy of wickedness, and these would be the first, or starting point of that system of wickedness.

Powers – The Greek is *exousia*. It indicates authority from conferred power, or that which is delegated. These would be under the “principalities” and would be granted power to carry out their designed schemes.

Both of the terms so far, meaning “principalities and powers,” have already been seen in Ephesians 1:21. They are being repeated here, but they are in subjection to Christ as was noted in that verse. Paul’s list continues next with:

The rulers of the darkness of this age – The Greek for “rulers” is found only here in the Bible. It is *kosmokratór*. It refers to Satan and demons who influence worldly people’s lives. The phrase is more correctly rendered, “the world-rulers of this darkness.” This word shows the limits of

these beings. In the Bible, Jesus is referred to as the *Pantokrator*, translated as “Almighty,” or “Ruler of all.” And so, *kosmokrator*, defines a limited being, and thus limited powers. However, it is a ruling ability which does span the entire world. There is no part of it which is not susceptible to their powers of darkness. And this darkness is set in contrast to Christ’s light.

Ephesians 2:2 shows that this power extended over the Ephesians (and thus anyone else before coming to Christ). But when the gospel was heard, they became obedient to it and moved from the darkness of the world to the light of Christ. As can be seen, this battle is spiritual in nature. This is confirmed in the next category...

Spiritual *hosts* of wickedness in the heavenly *places* – According to Vincent’s Word Studies, this “phrase is collective, of the evil powers viewed as a body. Wickedness is active evil, mischief.” The term “heavenly *places*,” or “heavenlies,” refers to the spiritual nature of the battle. Rather than be a fixed location, the battle is being waged as if in the air above, denoting all places and at any given time.

These forces have powers, but they are limited in nature. Further, they can be, and are being used, against Christians. In some cases, they are used to diminish their effectiveness. In others, their powers are used as a form of punishment for falling away. Two good examples of the latter are where Paul hands someone over to Satan for disobedience. These are found in 1 Corinthians 5:5 and 1 Timothy 1:20.

This is a real battle, and it has been going on since the very beginning of man’s time on earth. Only through Christ can these powers be defeated. Paul will explain what the implements of this battle for us to use are in the verses ahead. If we fail to pay heed to his words, we will find ourselves ineffective in the war which is being waged.

Life application: Anyone who doesn’t believe we are in a spiritual battle isn’t paying attention. If they are a believer in Christ, they are being duped by the very powers which Paul is describing. They may be saved, but they are doing more to help the enemy than to ensure that he is defeated. What a sad state for those who will someday stand before the Lord and have to face His judgment, having done nothing to further His kingdom.