

Sermon Title: This Is War! (Part 2)  
Scripture Text: Eph. 6:10-12 (Ephesians #46)

Speaker: Jim Harris  
Date: 8-7-22

---

Please come with me in your Bible to Ephesians Chapter 6. We can see the end coming from here. Not sure—two, three Sundays more, and we will finish this marvelous seminal book of doctrine about who we are "in Christ" (Eph. 1:3; cf. 2:5-6; 5:8) and what He designs the Church, the Body of Christ (1:22-23), to be like.

I want you to look to our text; here it is: Chapter 6, Verses 10-12. We are taking two Sundays to finish it, so this is the second part—where we look at the war that has been declared upon us.

And remember: When you get to a passage like this, this presumes that you are "in Christ" (2 Cor. 5:17). This is *not* a passage about how to get your sins forgiven, how to become a Christian, how to be adopted by God; this is about: "If you are 'in Christ,' I want you to understand the situation in which you live."

So here are the three verses that we began last week, and we will finish today: "Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might. Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places" (NASB-1995; and throughout, unless otherwise noted).

Now, notice, there are two commands there, and then an explanation. The first command: "Be strong." Well, you don't have the strength, but "be strong *in the Lord*"—He will *provide* the strength that you need (Ps. 29:11; 119:32; Phil. 4:13; Is. 40:29-31). The second command is: "Put on the full armor of God." Not only does God provide the strength that you need for the war that is waged against you, He provides what you need to stay safe from the enemy (2 Thess. 3:3; 1 Jn. 5:18b).

And then, the explanation: "For our struggle is not against flesh and blood"—it is a *spiritual* struggle. This is a *war* that comes upon you. The moment you put your faith in Jesus Christ, you become a child of God; and you become a member of the Church, the Body of Christ (Col. 1:18, 24)—and that puts you in the crosshairs of "the god of this age" (2 Cor. 4:4, LSB): Satan himself (cf. 1 Pet. 5:8). You are part of the entity that he has declared war against (Rev. 12:17).

It is a war of ideas, it's a war of concepts, it's a war about truth (2 Cor. 10:5); and ultimately, it is a war for souls (2 Tim. 2:26). And we have to battle completely in enemy territory, because he is the one who controls this world system (1 Jn. 5:19).

So, from those two commands and that explanation, here is our outline of these three verses:

- Number 1: Heed The Call To Battle, in Verse 10.
- Number 2: Listen to the instruction: Put On The Uniform, in Verse 11.
- Number 3: Know The Intelligence Report Of The Enemy, in Verse 12.

Now, after this, he is going to circle back and describe what that armor—uniform—is like.

Sermon Title: This Is War! (Part 2)  
Scripture Text: Eph. 6:10-12 (Ephesians #46)

Speaker: Jim Harris  
Date: 8-7-22

---

Heed The Call To Battle: Ephesians Chapter 6, Verse 10—"Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might." In the provision of God, you have the strength that you need, but you have to appropriate it by cooperating with His plan so that you can "stand firm" as you walk closely with Jesus Christ (Jn. 15:5; cf. Gal. 5:16). That *is* a call to battle: "Be strong in the Lord."

And then, secondly, the first part of Verse 11—"Put on the full armor of God"—put on your uniform—"so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil." And I emphasized to you last time that the command here to "put on"—very much like one we saw in Ephesians Chapter 4: "Put off...the old man" (vs. 22, NKJV), "be renewed in...your mind" (vs. 23), "put on" the characteristics of "the new man" (vs. 24)—this one, in this form, carries the idea of doing something once for all, *permanently* putting on your armor. Your armor is your *lifelong companion*. It is God's provision to you, as he says in Jude 24, "to keep you from stumbling, and to make you stand in the presence of His glory blameless with great joy."

"Stand firm" here, this imagery, has the idea that you hold a *critical* position, and you are under attack; and after a wave of attack from the enemy, when the enemy is gone, you are still standing firm, having held your ground (cf. Prov. 10:25). If you are to "stand firm" against God's enemies, you are going to have to be wearing your armor; and we will be talking about the armor next time.

Now, the grammatical break at the end of a sentence is actually at the end of this verse; but it bleeds over into Verse 12, and so we can say: Know The Intelligence Report On Your Enemy. We have been told what our enemy is like (e.g., Jn. 8:44; Rev. 12:9), we have been told much of what he does (Matt. 13:19; 2 Cor. 4:4), and we are going to get an idea of how he operates (2 Cor. 2:11).

So, "Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil." Notice the phrase: "against the schemes." "Against" is a little four-letter Greek preposition that means "face to face"; this is something that *daily* you have to battle with. You will be encountering strategies engineered by the enemy of your soul to attack you, to try to knock you from your "standing firm" for the truth.

Now, I'm not saying—and this does not say—that every Christian has *daily* personal encounters with Satan or with demons; quite the opposite is true. Satan is one angel, he can only be in one place at one time (cf. Job 1:7; 2:2), and you have probably never met him personally. He has a whole fleet of demons—fallen "angels" (Matt. 25:41)—at his disposal; and together, they have an organized way of manipulating and guiding things in the world. So every day, you must deal with his "schemes" against you (cf. Lk. 9:23). So on the one hand, he is saying, "This *is* personal; *you* have to deal with this every day." But he wants you to know: This is all part of a *massive* operation.

The word "schemes" is the other key word. It is a Greek word you didn't know that you knew; it's the Greek word *methodia*. We get our word "method" from it—the "methods" of the Devil. Now, please don't go tell your Methodist friends that they are of the Devil; they did not name their denomination that way for that reason at all.

Sermon Title: This Is War! (Part 2)  
Scripture Text: Eph. 6:10-12 (Ephesians #46)

Speaker: Jim Harris  
Date: 8-7-22

---

But this word means "cunning, artful, deceitful craftiness; trickery." It is a subtle thing; it's an under-the-current thing; it's a behind-the-scenes thing—but it is *very purposeful*. Satan is *not* flying by the seat of his pants with an ever-changing strategy to trip you up.

This word comes from a verb that means "to do something by a settled plan." He has laid out this strategy; and his methodical attack needs to be discerned by us, based upon what God has told us in His Word (1 Pet. 5:8-9).

There is another Greek word that is translated in this sentence; and you know the Greek word, but you probably didn't know that it was a Greek word: It is the word *diabolos*; it's translated "devil." It literally comes from two component words that together mean "to cast against" or "to throw against" or, if you will, "to oppose." The most generic meaning of it is: "accuser." Satan is "the accuser of our brethren" (Rev. 12:10; cf. Zech. 3:1)—he accuses and he *rails* against God and His people in any way that you can.

And what are we seeing in the degeneration of our culture? Less and less subtle, more and more overt opposition to God. After the first service, somebody showed me the cover page of a website that is promoting a really bad doctrine, to be honest with you; and the caption just simply said: "We are all born perfect." Well, *either that* or, "There is none righteous, not even one...There is none who seeks for God...all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:10-11, 23). It is getting more and more open in our world (cf. 2 Tim. 3:13).

But Satan is the source of this whole array of strategies used against you. This would have probably been more vividly perceived in First Century Ephesus, where these people had been saved directly out of an overt demonic religious system; Ephesus was a place of open idolatry and debauchery in the name of religion (cf. Rev. 2:13).

So, what do we know from this Intelligence Report On Our Enemies? Well, Verse 12; look again: "For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places."

The Greek word translated "struggle" is a wrestling term. One of the classic lexicographers of New Testament Greek was Joseph Thayer. He defines this word this way: "A contest between two in which each endeavors to throw the other, and which is decided when the victor is able to press down and hold his prostrate antagonist—namely, hold him down with his hand on his neck."

Now I took up wrestling in college—that's about ten years too late. I can read this, and I can understand the idea of being thrown down with a large angry person lying on top of you, making sure that you got impressed into the gym floor.

That is the idea. That is what Satan wants to do with you! He wants to, not have you "stand firm"—*he wants a takedown*, and he wants to *pin* you down. Now, he cannot take you away from Christ (Jn. 10:27-28)—oh, but he hates you.

Sermon Title: This Is War! (Part 2)  
Scripture Text: Eph. 6:10-12 (Ephesians #46)

Speaker: Jim Harris  
Date: 8-7-22

---

And notice: This is a battle that "is not against flesh and blood." He is saying this is not against *physical* enemies. This is a *spiritual* battle. The physical imagery is all the metaphors that tell you what is going on.

So, can you see what Paul is doing here? Who is "the god of this world" (2 Cor. 4:4)—the god of this system—"the god of this age" (LSB)? It's Satan. As you go about in this world, you will find various things that may tempt you to compromise somehow with the world (cf. Mk. 4:19).

And one of his most basic strategies—it might *seem* like it's not that big of a deal to you, but if he can just get you to think *primarily* in terms of *yourself*: that *you* are the most important, that the *most* important thing in the world is for *you* to be happy, for *you* to have personal peace and affluence (cf. Job 21:15; Mal. 3:14b), as Francis Schaeffer used to say back in the '60s and '70s. If you will think only in terms of "How can I be happy the rest of today?"—Satan has you *right where he wants you*, because he will use *any* number of things to get your eyes off of your identity in Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 6:19-20).

So Paul is showing us the *big picture*. Someone might come along into your life, show you some special attention, stroke your ego a little bit, maybe offer you some physical pleasure (e.g., Prov. 7:10-20); and if you are focused only on *that tempting thing* and how good *that* sounds, and you think only of *now*, you are going to be easy prey for an enemy (cf. Prov. 7:21-23; 25:28).

You need to see the bigger picture! "What lies will I end up telling, if I do this? What about the emotional wreckage to my family? And how will I tell my children to resist, if I wouldn't?" And what about your holy God, who "sees...in secret" (Matt. 6:4, 6, 18; cf. Prov. 5:21) and knows *not only* what you do, *not only* what you say, but also your "thoughts" and your "intentions" (Heb. 4:12; cf. Prov. 20:27)? So, when you see a situation from *that* perspective, you understand much more: *why* to "stand firm."

That is what Paul is trying to do for you in this passage. Each individual situation might not seem all that important to you. But if you are not going to make one colossal bad decision this Wednesday, what if he could just get you to make six little kind-of bad ones along the way? Then you'll be *set up* for the bigger fall.

The implication is clear: Satan has an organized army. What's in this verse is a bunch of military terms. If I said to you, "There is an enemy, and he has a *huge* number of forces at his command: he has privates and privates-first-class and sergeants and lieutenants and captains and colonels and majors and generals," you would know exactly what I meant, right? That is what you have here.

We don't know *exactly* the meaning of these terms in relationship to each other, but we know that these terms are used for angels—holy angels *and* fallen angels, who are the ones that rebelled with Satan (Rev. 12:3-4, 7-9). So apparently, when God created the angels, He created them in an organized, tiered structure of an authority system (e.g., Col. 1:16; cf. Rom. 8:38; Eph. 3:10; Col. 2:15). It is systematic, it is organized; orders come from the top, they get fulfilled down the road (e.g., Dan. 10:12-13, 20).

Sermon Title: This Is War! (Part 2)  
Scripture Text: Eph. 6:10-12 (Ephesians #46)

Speaker: Jim Harris  
Date: 8-7-22

---

And in different skirmishes in different places in different times, the strategy may be adapted; but the strategy is still always the same: Take down Christians! Oppose the Church, the Body of Christ. Demean Jesus Christ. Pervert the Gospel. Keep people from hearing the truth, how to be saved and transformed. That is *always* the big strategy.

Now, we don't know the difference between these terms, but we do know that there are ranks. There are "rulers"; that literally means "first ones" or "prominent ones"—I don't know, maybe they are colonels or one-star generals, I don't know what they are. Then there are "authorities"; that is another rank of demons, and some of the translations say "powers" instead of "authorities" because it refers to one who has the authority or the power to act on something.

And by the way: As I said, these same terms are used for holy angels; and if you go over and compare Colossians Chapter 1, Verse 16, you will find two more categories—translated "thrones" and "dominions"; and those imply realms in which one rules, or the seat form which the rule is enforced.

So don't make a big difference about this—like, you know, "I got through Tuesday okay; it was just one of the 'authorities' that came after me. But then, one of the '*rulers*' came after me on Thursday afternoon!" We don't know *anything* like that; and if you hear somebody speculating about that, run the other way, burn their books, get rid of it—don't let that stuff influence you! He has given you everything you need to know in His Word.

These are—I love this description—"world forces of this darkness." What is "this darkness"? Well, if you are in Christ—Colossians Chapter 1, Verse 13—you have been "rescued" from "the domain of darkness" and "transferred...to the kingdom of His beloved Son" (cf. Acts 26:18). You have been rescued from the world (cf. Jn. 15:19; Acts 2:40); you have been saved from your "sin" (Acts 10:43; Rom. 6:17).

And so they are "world forces of this darkness," and they are "spiritual forces of wickedness." And would you look where they operate: "spiritual forces of wickedness *in the heavenly places*." The Greek is literally "the *heavenlies*."

Remember where we have seen that word, right at the beginning of Ephesians: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the *heavenly places* in Christ" (1:3). Well, in that same realm—"the heavenly places," not physically on Earth; a demon doesn't come at you with a switchblade in the dark, not a physical attack—in the realm of spiritual things, this battle takes place.

And the point of this is to teach you: *You are in a battle!* Don't be complacent (cf. Am. 6:1). It is a battle for which God has provided us with all the resources that we need, and he is here giving us a good Intelligence Report On The Enemy.

He comes with "schemes"—or, "methods." And we can glean from the Scriptures, and from the experiences of 2,000 years of generations of God's people in Christ before us—we *know* what a lot of these "schemes" are (2 Cor. 2:11).

Sermon Title: This Is War! (Part 2)  
Scripture Text: Eph. 6:10-12 (Ephesians #46)

Speaker: Jim Harris  
Date: 8-7-22

---

Now, I am going to open the box and let out a little bit of a pet peeve in a little bit, here. But I want you to understand that there is a *giant* conspiracy against you! And it is a conspiracy that has to do with "truth" and "error" (1 Jn. 4:6), lies and falsehood, and undermining the truth (cf. Jn. 8:44).

And then I want you to see some of how it would appear that these methodical plots and "schemes" of the Devil are working out these days. Here is a list of some of the "schemes" or methods of Satan:

He loves to mix error with enough truth to make it appear plausible (e.g., Matt. 4:5-6). That's *exactly* what he did with Eve in Genesis Chapter 3, and he has been at it ever since. One of the massive ways to do it now is to say: "Well, *science* tells us that all of this stuff has come to be as it is by evolution; the Bible says God created it; so we are going to mash those two together, and we're going to come up with a Creation/Evolution hybrid description of everything"—which is a total denial of exactly what God says (e.g., Ex. 20:11; cf. Gen. 3:20; Mk. 10:6).

Very closely related to that, Satan loves to quote but misuse Scripture. The Devil didn't mind doing it to Jesus! He quoted Psalm 91 to Jesus when He was "on the pinnacle of the temple": "Throw Yourself down...He will...bear You up" with angels' wings (Matt. 4:6-7)—he just made sure that he twisted it; he made sure he did not apply it in a sense based upon the meaning of what the Holy Spirit intended for the people who read that initially to understand. Don't think that something is true just because it has Bible verses or Bible words attached to it (cf. Matt. 22:29; 2 Pet. 3:16).

Another thing that he loves to do is *good things*! Satan loves to masquerade behind good things. Second Corinthians 11:13 and 14 speaks of Satan and his emissaries—that would be his demons; that would be the "spiritual forces" that determine this whole world system—they *appear* as "angels of light." Well, *of course* they do! Have you ever had anybody come knocking on your door, and have a pamphlet or a book in their hand, and say, "Good morning! I am an emissary of Satan. Would you please invite me in so that I can teach you lies and condemn your whole family to hell?" *Of course not!* "We are here to tell people the 'good news'!" He masquerades behind *good things*.

Good works can be done by evil people—and they're *still* good works. They don't get anybody to Heaven; they do not gain you any spiritual merit. They are part of Satan's plan to *trick* you, to desensitize you to the reality of what he is trying to accomplish in opposing God. Drug dealers don't go to kids and offer them poison! They offer them candy, ice cream, a place to chill out. It's *always* trickery!

There is also mimicking God's works (e.g., Matt. 24:24; Acts 8:9-11; 2 Thess. 2:9; Rev. 13:13-14; 16:14). You know Matthew Chapter 7, Verse 22. At the time of the proverbial gates of Heaven, people are going to say, "Let us in! Didn't we do all of these things?" And they are going to mention miraculous things that they have done in His name. And Jesus is going to say, "Oh, I'm sorry, I didn't have you on My list. I'll add you right away!" No, He says: "*I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness*" (vs. 23).

Sermon Title: This Is War! (Part 2)  
Scripture Text: Eph. 6:10-12 (Ephesians #46)

Speaker: Jim Harris  
Date: 8-7-22

---

People can do things that *look* Christian, *sound* Christian, and they put Christian words on them—and they can be *completely phony*, mimicking God's works.

There's the one guy that I won't mention by name; he has been totally debunked now, but he is famous for lengthening people's legs, who had one leg shorter than the other. It's a parlor trick; it's completely phony—as is *everything* you see in the so-called "healing" ministries today! Do you think God is going to give a miraculous ministry to somebody who propagates a false gospel? No! (cf. Acts 14:3) It's *flawed*.

I have thought back many times, and I haven't come up with an explanation for this yet, what in the world they could have been thinking. God sent Moses to Pharaoh and said, "Let My people go" (Ex. 5:1). Pharaoh didn't want to do that. You know the back-and-forth: Eventually, ten plagues. The first plague comes; God is bringing judgment. And remember Pharaoh's "magicians" did what? They *imitated* it! (Ex. 7:11, 22; 8:7) "Oh, you're swarmed with locusts? Oh, your rivers all turned to blood? Well, *we can do that, too!*" *Really?* Wouldn't it be better to *reverse* the awful thing than to *duplicate* it? Well, I never have exactly figured out that one. But don't be tricked by the frauds (e.g., Deut. 13:1-3; Jer. 14:14).

There's more. Here's the one that is *absolutely* the center mass of deception in our world: Enticing people through "pride" (Prov. 11:12; 16:18; 29:23; Is. 2:17; 1 Tim. 3:6).

Remember not too long ago, Scott Freeman preached on this? First John Chapter 2, Verses 15 through 17—"Do not love the world nor the things in the world." Who is in charge of "the world"? Satan is "the god of this age" (2 Cor. 4:4, LSB). "If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh"—that's improper desires for feeling-oriented things that may or may not be sexual in every situation—"and the lust of the eyes"—that's the desire to have things beyond what is granted to us by God. Face it: Shiny things grab our attention. How many of you have waited to upgrade your phone until the old one died? Our whole advertising system is built upon convincing you *how badly you need something* that you didn't even know or ever thought about needing before; and there's something wrong with you if you don't have the biggest, the best, the shiniest! And that's all based on "the boastful pride of life." "We have the most; we have the biggest; we have the biggest budget; our church has the *most* people"—that temptation to be ostentatious and arrogant and proud. And John says those are "not" from God, they are "from the world," and we know "the whole world lies in the power of the evil one: (1 Jn. 5:19).

And then, you want to know Satan's Number 1 most consistent worldwide strategy is false religions and perversions of the truth. Satan is not an atheist! (Jas. 2:19; cf. Matt. 8:29) He is *extremely* religious! *He knows* that we are all "created...in the image of God" (Gen. 1:27; cf. Jb. 38:4, 7). *He knows* that God built into us a religious bent, if you will (cf. Ecc. 3:11). *He knows* we have a desire to understand: Who am I? Why am I here? Where am I going? He understands that, and so he will do anything he can to get people to worship *anything but* the one true Word of God and the one true Gospel of His Son, Jesus Christ (e.g., Ex. 32:4; Lev. 17:7; Deut. 4:28; 32:17; Ps. 106:37; Jer. 10:1-5; Acts 19:26; Rom. 1:25; 1 Cor. 10:20; 1 Jn. 2:18; 4:1-3).

Sermon Title: This Is War! (Part 2)  
Scripture Text: Eph. 6:10-12 (Ephesians #46)

Speaker: Jim Harris  
Date: 8-7-22

---

You want mystical, worshipful, out-of-body experiences? We have a pill for that! Drink this and take two of those, and we'll see you Tuesday night, when you come to. Drugs or alcohol—there are a lot of things you can do; but *anything* to satisfy that desire for *knowing* that big picture—other than the *true* big picture (cf. Jer. 2:13).

Now, don't forget: This passage is *not* addressed to people who do not know the truth! This is addressed to those of us who are "in Christ." It is a war—a scheming, deceptive, trick-filled war—organized by a *brilliant* enemy (Ezek. 28:12) who will do anything he can to trip you up. He has declared war on you.

Now, I'm going to try not to go on a rant. You'll *think* I did; that's okay—but I have a purpose. I'm going to open that box a little bit. One of my pet spiritual peeves is how frequently I see Christians get sidetracked these days into "conspiracy theories." Understand: There is one *gigantic* cosmic, eternal conspiracy.

Now, what is a "conspiracy"? Two or more people get together and conspire, plot, come up with a scheme, develop methods to do something (e.g., 1 Kings 15:27; 2 Kings 14:19; 21:23; Prov. 1:11; etc.). If I said, "The group was convicted of conspiracy to commit mail fraud," you would know exactly what I meant; or, "conspiracy to commit murder."

There *is* a massive eternal *spiritual* conspiracy.

Now, a "conspiracy *theory*" is a belief that observes something—a phenomenon, an idea, a product, whatever it is—and they say that there is some invisible huge organization or powerful entity responsible for doing this thing; and it implies that, "There is something that *you* don't know, and *I* do, and I'm going to tell you why you are stupid." That's pretty much what a "conspiracy theory" is.

The "serpent" (Gen. 3:1) came to Eve and suggested the first recorded conspiracy theory after the creation of man. What did he say? "Did God say...?" [with faux surprise] And I'm sure he said it with that tone. "Did God say that you can't eat of any tree of the garden?" Now, that's just almost identical to what God *said*—except he twisted it *just a little bit*. And the answer should have been: "He said we can eat of all the trees *but one*." So he picked on "that one": "Oh! God is *holding back* from you, you poor thing! Now, let me show you *how good that fruit tastes*, and you will become like God!" It was a "conspiracy theory": "God is *not benevolent*! He is *hiding something from you*!" That is the essence of how these things work: Quote a little bit of Scripture, but just misquoted it just a little bit.

Now, who do you think, in this cosmic scheme of things, has the most to gain if he can plant the idea in people that *nothing* is to be trusted? You can't *trust* who made that medicine for you. You can't *trust* who built that car for you. You can't *trust* who is running that company that you work for. *Satan* is the one who has the most to gain by planting the idea that you just can't trust anything. What does Postmodernism say? "There is no such thing as 'absolute truth.' You have yours, I have mine, and I happen to think that yours is a wacko conspiracy theory because it is, because you are a wacko and you are not looking at the evidence." He is the one who wants to mix all that stuff up!



Sermon Title: This Is War! (Part 2)  
Scripture Text: Eph. 6:10-12 (Ephesians #46)

Speaker: Jim Harris  
Date: 8-7-22

---

So it's not an accident! (Is. 5:20) Some of these things are absolutely laughable, but it's not an accident that they have come along, because every one of them *degrades* the idea that there is "truth" and there is "error" (1 Jn. 4:6), there is "right" and there is "wrong" (1 Pet. 3:17), there is "light" and there is "darkness" (Jn. 3:19), there is "God" and there is "Satan" who hates Him (Matt. 4:10).

You have heard some of them: The moon landing was faked. I heard that by a *PHD Physicist* in Russia who believes that! The Twin Towers were brought down by controlled demolition of multiple bombs that were placed carefully, long before the planes hit them. And/or, the whole thing was planned under the guidance of President Bush back in 2001. Princess Diana—tragic, sad death in a horrible car crash; did you know that she was really assassinated by British Intelligence agencies? There is one that says that Paul McCartney died in 1966. Did you know that space aliens crashed in New Mexico in 1947? There is a particularly wicked one that says that there is a worldwide Jewish conspiracy to achieve world domination.

I heard somebody say this on the radio one time, and I thought *sure* it was a joke, and it wasn't: Condensation trails from airplanes are actually full of chemicals of biological warfare; or, they are placed there to cause more clouds in order to increase global warming so that government can better control the population. No—actually, it's a big, hot engine burning stuff flying at a high altitude, and water condenses! And notice how long they last! You don't see big thunderstorms following along behind every 747 that flies through the world.

We dealt with the fact that the "Y2K bug" was going to end Western Civilization as we know it. Did you know that Barack Obama was born in Kenya? Did you know that cell phones cause brain cancer? Did you see the one this week—the guy just got a 40-some-million dollar judgment against him for promoting the theory that the Sandy Hook elementary school massacre didn't happen? Well, at least *one* got debunked.

And *now*, this has gone into *hyper-drive*—which, by the way, is myth. There is a *whole new avalanche* of conspiracy theories that continue to wash over us, connected to the Covid-19 era. And it *doesn't help* that—here's a secret for you—the Chinese government tells lies. Our own Centers for Disease Control has switched positions and changed courses several times along the way. And *would you believe*, the World Health Organization is actually *politicized*?

There *is* a bunch of nonsense out there! There *is* a bunch of confusion! *Who wants people to think you can't trust anybody?*—Satan—or else *you* just might wind up trusting God, and he will hate you for it (2 Tim. 2:26; 1 Jn. 3:8b).

It's not hard to spot conspiracy theories. Oh, but *they're so tasty* (cf. Prov. 18:8; 26:22), and people *love* to speculate, and then they love to research—but their research tends to always find the ones that reinforce their speculation. And I will never research anything on the Internet without *also* going and researching: Is there any *bias* here? Is there any contrary evidence here? And you just might find out that, oh, that was just *bunk*!

Sermon Title: This Is War! (Part 2)  
Scripture Text: Eph. 6:10-12 (Ephesians #46)

Speaker: Jim Harris  
Date: 8-7-22

---

Here is how to spot a conspiracy theory, and help you stay on track: Ask yourself, "How many people would have to be in the know and perfectly keep this secret and not one of them ever change their story or reveal evidence? Almost every conspiracy theory falls apart on that one. I mean, you can't keep a *surprise birthday party* a secret for a week in *your* family or *your* office—but you can keep a *worldwide conspiracy* silent, covered up completely?

Or, another one: When an obscure expert is quoted. You can probably just save yourself a bunch of time: Write off that subject; it's not going to be productive for you. If it really is an expert, the name will be there, the credentials will be there, the connections to the research will be there, and someone else will have checked the research and confirmed it. That is how the Scientific Method actually works.

There was a big one that was circulated in the height of the Covid Panic-demic—you know, when all we could do was stay home and look at our computers and listen to conspiracy theories. There was one that came about four or five times to me, and it came from some people that I actually respected—but it was all based upon work from a Stanford researcher; and it was *hard* to find who that person was, but I eventually found it, and it turned out: There either *is* no such person; or if there *is* such a person, that person was *never* associated with Stanford University! I mean, putting "Stanford University" on your research, that's a pretty credible sort of thing—unless it happens to be fraud.

And watch out, any time there is a person who claims to "know" something that isn't known. One of the most common ones is: "We *know* about this thing, and we *know* that only a *very small percentage of cases* is reported!" Well, would you think about that for about a millisecond? If it *isn't reported*, if there is *no record* of the cases, *how do you "know" what isn't known?* That's *sort of a problem*, isn't it?

And we have that *all the time!* The first major heresy that faced the Church was Gnosticism—salvation by knowledge. You have these levels of knowledge; and it you have achieved this level of knowledge, *you know the secrets!* "And oh, poor dear, I'm sorry *you* don't know the secrets. But *we know* what you don't know!" Well, how do I *know* that you know what I don't know? "You see, that proves that you don't know it!" (contra 1 Jn. 5:20)

*Who* would want people to think that *moronically?* Satan! I *don't care* about all those specific little conspiracy theories, but whoever would want people to think in that *ridiculous* fashion would be somebody who wanted people to think there is no way to *actually know* the truth (cf. Jn. 18:38).

You see, I actually *do* have a point here, that there is *one* ultimate conspiracy: Satan has declared war on us. John 8:44—"You are of your father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies."

Sermon Title: This Is War! (Part 2)  
Scripture Text: Eph. 6:10-12 (Ephesians #46)

Speaker: Jim Harris  
Date: 8-7-22

---

The world says: "You are 'basically good.' You were born innocent. We were all born perfect!"

The *Bible* says: "All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23).

"There is none righteous, not even one" (Rom. 3:10; cf. Gen. 6:5; 8:21; 1 Kings 8:46; Ps. 51:5; 58:3; 143:2; Ecc. 7:20; Matt. 7:11).

The world says: "Do you want to *really* know truth? Dig deep. Look inside. *Follow your heart!*"

God says: "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked" (Jer. 17:9, NKJV; cf. Prov. 28:26).

"Out of the heart come evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, slanders" (Matt. 15:19).

The world says: "Man's ingenuity and his scientific progress"—built upon a denial that God is the Creator—"they are going to make things better."

The Bible says: "Evil men and impostors will proceed from bad to worse, *deceiving and being deceived*" (2 Tim. 3:13; cf. Jer. 5:31; 1 Tim. 5:15; 2 Tim. 4:3-4). That's Second Timothy 3—that's leading-up-to-the-Second-Coming-of-Jesus kind of stuff!

The world says: "You need to learn to love yourself before you can truly love others."

God says: "I understand you. You are *totally* in love with yourself (cf. Ps. 73:3-12; Mk. 7:22g). So now, would you grow up and 'Love your neighbor' with the same fervor that you love yourself?" (Lev. 19:18; Matt. 19:19; 22:39; cf. 1 Cor. 13:5b; 2 Tim. 3:2)

There *is* a massive conspiracy in play in the world. Satan is the head of it (Rev. 12:9; 20:3). And we are called to think in a manner *completely* differently (cf. Is. 8:12-13).

Remember as we read through Proverbs, those "three things that are this, and four that are that" and "six are this and seven are that"? Remember the list of things of the things that God hates? And the pinnacle of that is: "sowing discord among brethren" (6:19, NKJV). Satan must just *sprain* something with how hard he smiles when he can get Christians to fight with each other over whether there is a conspiracy about a vaccination!

Okay, did I step on some toes? *They ought to be stepped on! Don't fight about things that aren't the truth!* (cf. Mk. 9:50; 2 Tim. 2:23) Don't *let* anybody get between you and a brother or sister in Christ! (cf. Ps. 119:53; 1 Cor. 1:10)

"Having done everything, *stand firm.*" And God has provided us with everything we need to defend ourselves against this onslaught (2 Cor. 6:7), "to stand firm against the schemes of the devil."

And now next week, I'm not just going to make you feel lousy about all the stuff that you wonder if you can believe now, we are going to put on our armor, and we are going to see what God has provided for us. Because my friends, this *is* war! The moment you came to Christ, you fell into the crosshairs. There is an enemy who hates you and everything good in your soul, hates the Christ that you love, hates the Word that you believe—so let's "stand firm"!

Sermon Title: This Is War! (Part 2)  
Scripture Text: Eph. 6:10-12 (Ephesians #46)

Speaker: Jim Harris  
Date: 8-7-22

---

*Heavenly Father, thank You for Your marvelous grace in Christ. You have told us that through Christ, You are able to "make us stand"; and You have told us that, "Having been justified," we "stand firm" in Your "grace"—it is in Your grace that we stand. And as we stand there, we are sanctified—made more and more like Your Son, day by day. Father, give us the healthy distrust of things in the world, and give us the unshakable trust in Your Word. Give us discernment to understand the difference. Give us kindness and compassion as we speak with people in the world, knowing that they are not our enemy—they are the captives of the enemy of our souls. And above all, Father, put the wonderful words of the Gospel of Jesus Christ on our lips, and bring us to many opportunities to "speak" it "in love." For we pray in Jesus' name. Amen.*