

THE ARMOR OF GOD

"The Enemies: External"

2 Kings 6:8-22

The king of Syria planned to make war on Israel. He called his war counsel together and asked his generals where the best place would be to encamp his forces and trap the king of Israel. After hearing their counsel, the king decided and pointed on the map, "Here we will set up our camps." As they lie in ambush for the king of Israel, the Israelites would pass them by on the flank and avoid the trap. This happened time and again.

The king was distraught. Their plans were militarily sound, based on good intelligence as to the whereabouts and maneuvers of the king of Israel and his forces. After it became patently obvious that the king of Israel was aware of every ambush the king of Syria set, the king of Syria began to interrogate his officers. "Which one of you is a spy for the king of Israel? There's a mole in my camp and I want to know who it is!"

The officers were struck with fear. They were all faithful to their lord and just as frustrated as he was at being thwarted at every turn. Finally, one brave soul stepped forward. "None of us have been disloyal to you, my lord. But in Israel there is this prophet by the name of Elisha. He is able to tell the king of Israel the very words my lord whispers in his bedchamber." This news distressed the king. A seer was thwarting his plans against Israel.

"Send out the spies," the king commanded, "find out where this Elisha lives." The report came back not long thereafter. "Elisha the prophet lives in Dothan." Now Dothan was only 11 miles north of Samaria, the capital of Israel, the northern kingdom. The king of Syria dispatched his chariot corps, a detachment of cavalry, and a heavily armored force. "Bring to me this prophet Elisha," he commanded.

Elisha's servant woke up early in the morning to go to market and get the day's supplies. But he found the city gates closed. Merchants, farmers, and shepherds were not coming into town to sell their wares in the market. What is wrong, the young man wondered. He made his way on top of the wall and what he saw made his heart melt. The city was surrounded by the Syrian army; horsemen, charioteers, and footmen. He raced to the house. "Master, master, come quickly! You must see!"

Elisha allowed himself to be led to the rooftop. He saw what his servant had seen. But he saw more.

II Ki 6:15-17

15b "Oh, my lord, what shall we do?" the servant asked.

16 "Don't be afraid," the prophet answered. "Those who are with us are more than those who are with them."

17 And Elisha prayed, "O LORD, open his eyes so he may see." Then the LORD opened the servant's eyes, and he looked and saw the hills full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha. (NIV)

We are in a study on the armor of God. We have examined ourselves as soldiers, saved from slavery to satan into the kingdom of God by the new birth. We've seen how Jesus, through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit empowers us to change our old ways of rebellion and sin to a new walk of victory with him. We have also looked at the Biblical principle of being clothed; how we need to put off the "old man" which is corrupt in its ways and put on the "new man" which is created after Christ Jesus.

Now, like Elisha's servant, our prayer is that our eyes be opened that we might see the "those" that are with us and the "those" that are with them and to understand supernaturally that we are on the side of clear superiority.

Eph 6:10-13

10 Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power.

11 Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes.

12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.

13 Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. (NIV)

Meet the external enemy! The purpose of the armor of God is to take our stand against the wiles of the devil and be equipped in our struggle against rulers, authorities, powers of this dark work, and spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realm. Remember the western (movie) proverb, "Never bring a knife to a gunfight?" That principle applies here. We were born in a war, a spiritual war. One of the wiles of the devil is to trick you into believing that the battle was against flesh and blood.

Can you see Elisha sending a carrier pigeon to the king of Israel. "DOTHAN SURROUNDED. STOP. SYRIAN ARMY SEEKS TO CAPTURE ME. STOP. SEND FORCES. STOP. HELP. STOP." No, the Lord has always declared that the battle is his. As the Lord told Zerubbabel, "not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the LORD of hosts." Elisha prayed that the Syrians would be blind to their real surroundings. Then he led them the 11 miles south to Samaria and delivered them to the king of Israel. A whole army captured by a miracle of God!

The enemy we stand against is the devil. The subject of standing is vast in the word of God. In the New Testament alone we have:

Standing afar off - a position for mercy in the face of impending judgment.

Standing without - a position of denial, either denying or having been denied.

Standing in the midst - a position of being the center of focus.

Standing idle - self explanatory (many are called, few are chosen).

Standing still - a position of miracle expectancy.

Standing by - a position of observational passivity.

Standing before - a position for review and judgment.

Standing in - a position of committed continuance (grace, the gospel, faith, and all the will of God).

The Lord Jesus is spoken of as standing at the right hand of God, in the midst of the throne, at the door, and on Zion.

But here in Ephesians, the phrase is "standing against." The Greek word translated "against" in Ephesians 6:11 is the word pros. In every other verse where this word pros is used with the word for stand, it is translated "unto" or "to". The point is that we are not to think statically or passively with regard to our stance against our adversary. We are standing against the forces of the enemy: toe to toe, face to face, dressed for battle. We are not holed up in some cloistered cathedral waiting for an attack. The posture of the believer is aggressive.

Matt 16:18

And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it. (NIV)[*Gates do not advance, they are assaulted.*]

Matt 11:12

From the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of heaven has been forcefully advancing, and forceful men lay hold of it. (NIV)

1 Cor 9:26

I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air: (KJV)

We fight with a purpose. We were born into this battlefield.

Matt 13:24-30; 36-43

24 Jesus told them another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field.

25 But while everyone was sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat, and went away.

26 When the wheat sprouted and formed heads, then the weeds also appeared.

27 "The owner's servants came to him and said, 'Sir, didn't you sow good seed in your field? Where then did the weeds come from?'

28 "'An enemy did this,' he replied. "The servants asked him, 'Do you want us to go and pull them up?'

29 "'No,' he answered, 'because while you are pulling the weeds, you may root up the wheat with them.

30 Let both grow together until the harvest. At that time I will tell the harvesters: First collect the weeds and tie them in bundles to be burned; then gather the wheat and bring it into my barn.'"

36 Then he left the crowd and went into the house. His disciples came to him and said, "Explain to us the parable of the weeds in the field."

37 He answered, "The one who sowed the good seed is the Son of Man.

38 The field is the world, and the good seed stands for the sons of the kingdom. The weeds are the sons of the evil one,

39 and the enemy who sows them is the devil. The harvest is the end of the age, and the harvesters are angels.

40 "As the weeds are pulled up and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of the age.

- 41 The Son of Man will send out his angels, and they will weed out of his kingdom everything that causes sin and all who do evil.
42 They will throw them into the fiery furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.
43 Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear. (NIV)

Are you a child of the kingdom? Then you were sown by the son of man in the field of the world and you are growing up along side the tares sown by your enemy, the devil. You were born in contested ground and he wants to choke you out. To fight any battle, you need intelligence. You need to know the enemies strength and the strength of your own army.

Eph 6:12

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. (KJV)

Are these definite levels in the evil kingdom, or just different words that depict for us the spiritual nature of the battle? Well, let's look at some other scriptures.

Eph 1:18-23

- 18 I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints,
19 and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is like the working of his mighty strength,
20 which he exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms,
21 far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every title that can be given, not only in the present age but also in the one to come.
22 And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church,
23 which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way. (NIV)

We need spiritual insight and understanding (just like Elisha's servant) to understand what God placed his Son over.

Col 1:16-18

- 16 For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him.
17 He is before all things, and in him all things hold together.
18 And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. (NIV)

I believe that the nature of our God would substantiate an understanding of differing levels of spiritual authorities. Our God is a God of order. This order was exemplified from the first and continues to today.

We have around us the animal kingdom, the plant kingdom, and the mineral kingdom. Above all these man is supposed to have dominion. Basically, these kingdoms were created in ascending order, ending with God's crowning achievement: the man and the woman. Are there differing levels in the angelic host?

Jude 1:8-11

- 8 In the very same way, these dreamers pollute their own bodies, reject authority and slander celestial beings.
- 9 But even the archangel Michael, when he was disputing with the devil about the body of Moses, did not dare to bring a slanderous accusation against him, but said, "The Lord rebuke you!"
- 10 Yet these men speak abusively against whatever they do not understand; and what things they do understand by instinct, like unreasoning animals-- these are the very things that destroy them.
- 11 Woe to them! They have taken the way of Cain; they have rushed for profit into Balaam's error; they have been destroyed in Korah's rebellion. (NIV)

Even the level of rebellion is different (in regard to God's representatives). Cain spoke directly against God. Balaam defied the angel blocking the way. And Korah stood against Moses and Aaron.

2 Pet 2:10-12

- 10 But chiefly them that walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness, and despise government. Presumptuous are they, selfwilled, they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities.
- 11 Whereas angels, which are greater in power and might, bring not railing accusation against them before the Lord.
- 12 But these, as natural brute beasts, made to be taken and destroyed, speak evil of the things that they understand not; and shall utterly perish in their own corruption; (KJV)

1 Cor 15:39-41

- 39 All flesh is not the same: Men have one kind of flesh, animals have another, birds another and fish another.
- 40 There are also heavenly bodies and there are earthly bodies; but the splendor of the heavenly bodies is one kind, and the splendor of the earthly bodies is another.
- 41 The sun has one kind of splendor, the moon another and the stars another; and star differs from star in splendor. (NIV)

Stars are used symbolically in the word of God in regard to angelic beings. In the Lord's host there are cherubim, seraphim, the angel of the Lord, the seven angels before his throne, the seven thunders, the Archangel Michael (the prince of the people of Israel), and the Captain of the Lord's host.

Josh 5:13-15

- 13 And it came to pass, when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted up his eyes and looked, and, behold, there stood a man over against him with his sword drawn in his hand: and Joshua went unto him, and said unto him, Art thou for us, or for our adversaries?

14 And he said, Nay; but as captain of the host of the LORD am I now come. And Joshua fell on his face to the earth, and did worship, and said unto him, What saith my lord unto his servant?
15 And the captain of the LORD's host said unto Joshua, Loose thy shoe from off thy foot; for the place whereon thou standest is holy. And Joshua did so. (KJV)

What do you supposed caused the geologic event that made the walls of Jericho crumble? It is not a physical battle of the flesh. The Lord speaks to us in type by way of the children of Israel in the Old Testament. They were a reflection of the spiritual reality.

Exod 12:51

And it came to pass the selfsame day, that the LORD did bring the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt by their armies. (KJV)

Exod 15:3

The LORD is a man of war: the LORD is his name. (KJV)

Deut 1:10-15

10 The LORD your God hath multiplied you, and, behold, ye are this day as the stars of heaven for multitude.

11 (The LORD God of your fathers make you a thousand times so many more as ye are, and bless you, as he hath promised you!)

12 How can I myself alone bear your cumbrance, and your burden, and your strife?

13 Take you wise men, and understanding, and known among your tribes, and I will make them rulers over you.

14 And ye answered me, and said, The thing which thou hast spoken is good for us to do.

15 So I took the chief of your tribes, wise men, and known, and made them heads over you, captains over thousands, and captains over hundreds, and captains over fifties, and captains over tens, and officers among your tribes. (KJV)

Deut 20:1-9

1 When thou goest out to battle against thine enemies, and seest horses, and chariots, and a people more than thou, be not afraid of them: for the LORD thy God is with thee, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.

2 And it shall be, when ye are come nigh unto the battle, that the priest shall approach and speak unto the people,

3 And shall say unto them, Hear, O Israel, ye approach this day unto battle against your enemies: let not your hearts faint, fear not, and do not tremble, neither be ye terrified because of them;

4 For the LORD your God is he that goeth with you, to fight for you against your enemies, to save you.

5 And the officers shall speak unto the people, saying, What man is there that hath built a new house, and hath not dedicated it? let him go and return to his house, lest he die in the battle, and another man dedicate it.

6 And what man is he that hath planted a vineyard, and hath not yet eaten of it? let him also go and return unto his house, lest he die in the battle, and another man eat of it.

7 And what man is there that hath betrothed a wife, and hath not taken her? let him go and return unto his house, lest he die in the battle, and another man take her.

- 8 And the officers shall speak further unto the people, and they shall say, What man is there that is fearful and fainthearted? let him go and return unto his house, lest his brethren's heart faint as well as his heart.
- 9 And it shall be, when the officers have made an end of speaking unto the people, that they shall make captains of the armies to lead the people. (KJV)

What about the church? Is there a Biblical authoritative structure in the body of Christ? Yes! We have already seen that Christ is the head.

1 Cor 12:28

And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues. (KJV)

Eph 2:20-21

20 And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone;

21 In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: (KJV)

Being on the front line puts them on the firing line.

Rev 18:20, 24

20 Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets; for God hath avenged you on her.

24 And in her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth. (KJV)

Rev 12:3-4

3 And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads.

4 And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth: and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born. (KJV)

He is outnumbered 2 to 1, but it is a "have no mercy, give no quarter" war. He wants to take down as many with him as he can. If you are going to walk with the Lord and advance the kingdom of God, you will have to come against the demonic kingdom.

Mark 6:7-13 (KJV)

7 And he called unto him the twelve, and began to send them forth by two and two; and gave them power over unclean spirits;

8 And commanded them that they should take nothing for their journey, save a staff only; no scrip, no bread, no money in their purse:

9 But be shod with sandals; and not put on two coats.

10 And he said unto them, In what place soever ye enter into an house, there abide till ye depart from that place.

11 And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear you, when ye depart thence, shake off the dust under your feet for a testimony against them. Verily I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrha in the day of judgment, than for that city.

12 And they went out, and preached that men should repent.

13 And they cast out many devils, and anointed with oil many that were sick, and healed them.

Mark 16:17-18

17 And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues;

18 They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover. (KJV)

Luke 10:17-21

17 And the seventy returned again with joy, saying, Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name.

18 And he said unto them, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven.

19 Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you.

20 Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven.

21 In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes: even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight. (KJV)

The praise lies in that our names are written in heaven.

As we study the implements of this warfare, they will disclose the wiles of the devil. Amen!