

What to Wear to War

Part I

The Gospels

Selected Scripture

Introduction

It was just at the outset of World War II, so Manchester writes in his volume on Churchill's life, *The Last Lion*, and Germany was preparing to invade Poland. It seems, according to history, that Poland was not overly concerned because they had quite a history of repelling attacks. They were known for their great horsemanship and they had their twelve brigades of Calvary men prepared and ready. However, World War II opened in a rather stunning manner. As soon as the Nazi's appeared, the Calvary officers sounded the charge and galloped on their horses with spears and lances ready – right into the face of the newly developed German Panzer tanks. Obviously, the Polish Calvary was crushed immediately.

When I read this story, it occurred to me that we, as believers, so often take on our fierce opponent galloping on a horse with lance ready. However, the Bible has already told us that our weapons are not natural; they are not made of this flesh, but are supernatural. We should be prepared to face the enemy of our soul with the right weaponry, if we ever hope to defend against and win the attacks.

To know how to do this, I want to continue our study on conquering the kingdom of Satan. Turn in your Bible to the book of II Corinthians. We are going to cover a lot of scripture today.

The Designations of Satan

Let us begin with a brief review of who our enemy is.

Names that Jesus Christ called Satan

Jesus Christ called the accuser or attacker by three different names in the New Testament.

1. The first name is Satan.

This name means “adversary or opposer”. He is the enemy of everything holy and his name signifies that.

2. The second name that Christ used is the devil.

This name means “slanderer or accuser”.

The devil will slander, as we studied last week, God before you. He will tell you that God is not trustworthy; God is not good; God is not a loving God.

He will also slander you before God. The devil stands before God and says, “Did you see what So-and-so did or thought or was going to do . . .?”

This, in a sense, is referenced in his name, the devil.

3. The third name that he is called by Christ is Beelzebub.

This is translated, “lord of the flies or master of the flies”. In other words, he is the mastermind of everything corrupt.

The name Beelzebub signifies his corruption and the network of his kingdom being corrupt. He is the master.

Other names Scripture gives to Satan

Let me give several other names given for Satan in scripture, although this is not an exhaustive list. These names each reveal different signifying characteristics of Satan.

1. Satan is called the prince of the world.

He is the prince of this world, which involves his mastery over mankind. Satan has instituted a phenomenal system that we know from scripture has quite a network of communication.

I find it fascinating, in fact, that in Acts 19:11-17, when false Jewish exorcists are trying to cast a demon

out of an unbelieving man, the demon speaks through that man and says,

. . . ***“I recognize Jesus, and I know about Paul, but who are you?”***

It is fascinating that these demons, which are local, not omnipresent, knew about Paul. There was a system; a network of communication that still exists today in this kingdom. There is communication back and forth in order to bring us to a place of despair, discouragement, and disqualification.

2. Satan is called a murderer.

This relates to his destructive nature.

3. Satan is also called a liar.

A liar is one who will say anything necessary to advance his cause and Satan will do this.

4. Satan is called the dragon.

This relates to his maliciousness; his hostility.

5. Satan is called the old serpent, as well.

This refers to his cunningness; his strategy; his cleverness; his craftiness.

6. Satan is called, finally, the angel of light.

This is a reference to his counterfeiting ability. He counterfeits the work of God.

It is rather amazing the way he can do this, in fact. Satan has such power that I think we do not even realize or recognize it at times.

If we go back to Exodus, we find, as you may remember, that Moses stood before Pharaoh and said,

. . . ***“Let My people go . . .” (Exodus 5:1)***

Pharaoh responded, “Show me some power or some signs.”

So, Moses threw his rod down and it became a serpent. (Exodus 7:10)

Do you remember what happened next?

The sorcerers of Pharaoh’s courts threw their rods down and their rods turned into wriggling, live, slimy snakes. (Exodus 7:11-12)

Satan is quite a power; quite a counterfeiter.

The text in Exodus, in fact, tells that Satan copied several of the plagues. I think this is one of the reasons that Pharaoh was not so impressed with Yahweh. Pharaoh’s magicians; his sorcerers; his demon worshipers were able to counterfeit the same plagues that Moses was able to bring about by the power of Yahweh.

For this reason, I think, and want to warn, that dabbling is so dangerous. I do not think we will ever recognize the full power and potential of this snake; this dragon. I would say that if you read a horoscope, you are opening yourself up to something that you and I do not fully realize or recognize. Divination, tarot cards, experimenting with the ouija board, lighting a candle and getting around a table and holding hands and having a séance may seem rather curious and experimental, but they assist, rather than resist, the opposer; the accuser of our souls. Resist him and do not dabble.

I read this past week, a rather frightening story of a minister who decided to reveal the fallaciousness of this kingdom. He went to an astrologer and had his personal horoscope read. He took a copy of his horoscope back to his congregation and said, in a mocking, tongue-in-cheek fashion, “This is supposedly what is going to happen in my life.”

His congregation had a good laugh, but the things in the horoscope began to happen; began to come true. This minister tells that his life began to be filled with fear. All of a sudden, the Bible became a closed book to him. He became unable to lead. There was an oppression that settled over his soul until finally, he recognized that by dabbling in something he did not fully understand or even recognize, he had literally opened the door for satanic oppression.

The message this minister would give is, “Stay away!”

The Designs of Satan

Now there are three designs or devices of Satan. Let me go over these. They are found by way of three different words in the original text.

1. The first of the designs of Satan are his schemes.

This is found in II Corinthians 2:11.

so that no advantage would be taken of us by Satan, for we are not ignorant of his schemes.

Satan’s schemes or designs; his “noema” reveal his evil schemings. In fact, this word, unlike the other two words that we will see, refers to the intellectual capacity. This word appears six more times in the New Testament and every other time it is translated, “thought or mind”.

Satan has designed his attacks in one of three ways to affect our minds, our intellectual capacity;

our ability to reason and to think, which is referred to in this verse.

Paul says, “Take care that he doesn’t take advantage of you.”

This means to defraud through some kind of trickery.

Mental battlegrounds in Satan’s schemes

Turn to II Corinthians 10 where we find three strategic mental battlegrounds in Satan’s “noema”; that is, that which Satan attacks.

Look at II Corinthians 10:3.

For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh,

We do not war with weapons that are fleshly. Continue to II Corinthians 10:4.

for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses.

Now Paul talks about three things that we are to destroy. Underline each of these words in your text.

- The first mental battleground is speculations.

Look at II Corinthians 10:5a.

We are destroying speculations . . .

This could be translated, “imagination”. This is referring to the arguments that we have when we live speculating, “What if this might happen?” This is the speculation or the imagination that so easily catches us off guard when we live our lives saying, “What if . . . What if . . .?”

We find ourselves bound in our minds, incapable of serving or working because Satan has us chained with the old, “What if,” game. Some people are so tied to this that they are afraid of taking any chance or risk of doing anything, whether it is in service or life itself.

- The second mental battleground is lofty thing.

Look at II Corinthians 10:5b.

We are destroying . . . every lofty thing . . .

This refers to the lofty pride of man against God. In fact, look at the next phrase,

. . . every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God . . .

This is the pride of man’s intellect. This is the individual who says, “Well, I know what’s right. I’m doing what’s right.”

Satan attacks by getting us to say, “Well, what if this should happen. Maybe we shouldn’t . . . Maybe God will drop the ball . . . Maybe this bad thing will happen . . .”

Satan also attacks by getting us to say, “Well, I’m going to do this and I know it is right.”

We lift our intellectual ability above God’s. In fact, we never go to God. We make up our minds on our own.

- The third mental battleground is thought.

Look at II Corinthians 10:5c.

. . . and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ, . . .

This is the same word translated “devices or plans”.

So Satan has, not only these devices or this mental battleground, but he also has designs.

2. The second of the designs of Satan are his strategies.

These are the strategies that Satan uses against the believer. The word is “methodeias,” from which we get our word, “method”. Satan has his wily, crafty, cunning, “methodeias,” or methods.

In Ephesians 4:14, Paul talks about the methods of men being motivated by Satan.

In Ephesians 6:11, he tells us,

Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil.

Your translation may read, “against the wiles of the devil.” This is the “methodeias” or the methods of Satan. We are going to talk about the armor of God in a minute.

Methods of Satan’s strategies

How does Satan strategize against us? Let me give four ways.

- First, Satan will tempt or seduce the believer.

Satan will use the believer’s emotional make-up to tempt or to seduce.

We can look through the Bible and find this to be true. Whether it is Elijah with his discouragement, Jonah with his unforgiving spirit that produced anger

against the believing Ninevites, or Peter with his cowardice ultimately denying Jesus Christ, Satan is crafty and knows the buttons in our lives and just how to push them.

- Secondly, Satan will persecute the believer.

In II Corinthians 12:7, Paul refers to,

. . . a thorn in [his] flesh . . .

I read books this past week, and came up with at least seven thoughts as to what this thorn was. Some thought it was epilepsy. Some thought it was an eye disease. Some thought it was a stutter. Others thought it was a number of illnesses that he had. However, I think we get so caught up in thinking about what the thorn was that we forget the next phrase in this verse. Paul says,

. . . a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to torment me . . .

Ladies and gentlemen, we can have some kind of illness, some plague, some problem, some difficulty and, although I would be the last to say that Satan is the engineer behind them all, we must be aware of our enemy's tactics and realize that he may be behind it. Yet, Paul then said, "But, oh, I allowed God's grace to work in me so that I was given strength."

Paul was not defeated by this messenger of Satan that had been sent to literally, strike him.

- Thirdly, Satan flatters the believer.

By persecution, Satan causes the believer to take his eyes off the providence of God. By flattery, he gets the believer to take his eyes off the glory of God. Either way – persecution or flattery – we, as believers, are side-tracked and Satan is winning.

- Fourthly, Satan divides the believers.

Satan used this in the first family after they had been kicked out of the garden. Of the first two boys that had ever been born to a human family, one killed the other. (Genesis 4)

Satan used this in the very first church in Jerusalem. They were moving right along, when all of the sudden, he injected the poison of suspicion. There was grumbling and an arising of suspicion among the Grecian widows, who were feeling left out. (Acts 6)

3. The third of the designs of Satan are his snares.

Among Satan's devices are not only his schemes and his strategies, but his snares. Turn to I Timothy 3:7a.

And he must have a good reputation with those outside the church, . . .

Who is the "he" in this verse? Paul is referring to the elder; the man who would hold the office of leadership, administration, oversight. I Peter also talks about the men who would rule the congregation. The elder is to be a godly man.

What does Paul say is the possibility in this man's life?

And he must have a good reputation . . . so that he will not fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.

Now, at this point, I would perk up and say, "Give me a little more. I need some help."

Turn to II Timothy 2:24-26, where we find the same thought.

The Lord's bond-servant must not be quarrelsome, but be kind to all, able to teach, patient when wronged,

with gentleness correcting those who are in opposition, if perhaps God may grant them repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth,

and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, having been held captive by him to do his will.

The same word is used in reference to a godly man and an unbeliever.

How serious is the threat of Satan? In the first prayer, or the prayer that Jesus taught His disciples to pray, what was one of the phrases? Jesus said, "I want you men, and all the believers after you, to pray like this,

And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one. (Matthew 6:13 NKJV)

You might say, "Now wait a second! I thought I was already delivered."

Jesus Himself, as recorded in John 17:15, will pray to His Father,

I do not ask You to take them out of the world, but to keep them from the evil one.

Now this raises a question. You are probably asking, "What about demon possession in this?"

I was asked this question more than any other after our last session. Listen very carefully to what I am about to say because I do not want to be

misunderstood. I think this is very serious. The question is, “Do I believe that a demon can possess the life of a believer? Can a Christian be demon-possessed?”

What I hold to primarily, is that there is no illustration in scripture – not one – of a believer being exorcised of a demon. We do not find this during the ministry of Jesus Christ or during the ministry of Paul or the apostles after him. So there has to be a difference. I, in fact, hold this as a very weighty matter.

We have passages that would raise questions, however. Look at I Corinthians 5:5, where Paul talks about the errant believer being delivered. He says,

I have decided to deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of his flesh, so that his spirit may be saved . . .

Let me draw the conclusion, and I do not think you want to hear all the processes. The conclusion is that I offer absolutely no hope to the individual today, who is rejecting Jesus Christ as Savior. To reject Him means you are an open target. The potential of you being held captive to do the will of the demon world is as close as a breath away. There is no hope. To the believer, I offer absolutely no hope to the one who is in rebellion against God. It was the one who rebelled against God, about which Paul said,

I have decided to deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of his flesh . . .

I believe that this possession cannot take place in the same sense as in an unbeliever because I believe the Christian is purchased property and the devil no longer has squatter’s rights. But can Satan oppress the believer? The distinction between oppression and possession is a lot closer than I think we would like to believe. It is possible for Stephen Davey to do the will of Satan – and that is frightening.

The Defense Against Satan

What is our defense against Satan? What is our hope? Is there any?

Yes, there is. Our hope and defense against Satan is the armor of God. Why would the armor of God be necessary if we were not to resist and to defend ourselves?

The believer who lays down the sword of the Spirit; the believer who rejects the word of God is prey to demonic oppression. It is possible to fall into the snare of the devil in the same way as the elder who

somehow loses his reputation or by sinning, falls into reproach. The believer who puts away the belt of truth, the word of God, the believer who refuses to pray, who lives in antagonism against God because He has done something to them, or whatever it may be, is open prey for oppression.

What is the only hope? It is taking on the armor of God. It is recognizing that we are involved in *battle*. The faster we learn this and the more seriously we take this, the better off we will be in the kingdom and church of Jesus Christ.

Let us run to Ephesians chapter 6. Begin with Ephesians 6:10-11a.

Finally, be strong in the lord, and in the strength of His might.

Put on . . .

The phrase “put on” means, “to put on once and for all”. The armor that the apostle Paul is about to describe is not the same as a game uniform that is used when it is time to be in a contest of some sort. This armor is to be put on and left on until the day of death because the battle never stops. The tense of this phrase in the original language has the thought, “put it on, once for all.” In other words, “Keep it on. Never take it off.” If you lay down the sword of the Spirit and neglect the belt of truth, you are vulnerable for defeat in your life.

Paul then goes on to say, in Ephesians 6:11a,

Put on the full armor of God, . . .

I think this is one of the most beautiful phrases and wish it had been translated a little more expansively. This phrase means, “Put on the full armor which is sourced in God; which is created by God; the source of which is God Himself.”

In other words, we are not creating the armor. We do not have to wonder, “Is this sword good enough? Am I a good enough Christian to really have a strong breastplate?”

We all have the same armor available to us. It is all sourced; all created by God. We can have confidence that it works. This gives me great comfort.

I am reminded of a story that I read a year ago. An astronaut, after his return to earth, was asked the question, “What did you think about when you were sitting on the moon in your spacecraft?”

He thought for a moment and then replied, “The first thought that came to my mind, as I looked back

toward tiny little earth, was the fact that my spacecraft had been built by the lowest bidder.”

This astronaut did not have a lot of confidence in his equipment. However, it is a beautiful thing that we know Who made our armor and that it will work, if we will simply wear it.

Paul says further, in Ephesians 6:11b,

. . . so that you will be able to stand firm ...

This literally means, “to take over; to watch; to take hold; to take a strategic position; to take a stand and be ready.”

Continue to Ephesians 6:11b-13a

. . . 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.

Therefore, take up the full armor of God, so that you will be able to resist in the evil day . . .

The implication is that if we do not take up the armor of God, we will not be able to resist Satan. He will then, oppress us and we will lose our joy, fulfillment, and effectiveness.

The word “struggle,” or “wrestle” as your translation may read in verse 12, is fascinating. Paul takes it, just as he does many other words, right out of the athletic contests of the Roman world. To struggle in that day, was rather interesting and tragic.

The Roman people were so glutinous and desirous of pleasure and amusement that they turned their athletic contests into life and death struggles. In that day, to struggle meant that if they were able to pin the shoulders of their opponent to the floor or mat, they would win, and if they were able to pin the shoulders as well as the head of their opponent to the floor, their defeated opponent was executed.

Paul uses this word “struggle” in this context. We are in a struggle. Although we will never lose our souls; although we are complete in Christ and will be forever, we struggle in the war in which Satan will sap our joy and take our fulfillment and effectiveness, in order to sidetrack us and put us on a shelf. This is what we have to lose as we struggle against Satan.

What piece of armor does Paul begin with?

1. The first piece of the armor of God is the belt of truth.

We learn this in Ephesians 6:14a.

Stand firm therefore, having girded your loins with truth, . . .

The girdle or the belt was foundational. We need to get away from the mentality or the thought in our minds of a sash or a belt like we would wear today. This was literally, a leather apron that went down to just below the thighs and was strapped at the waist.

This was the foundational piece of armor. In fact, most of the other pieces were attached in some way to this leather apron or this belt. We know that this piece was a sheath for the sword. Paul says that we are to gird our loins in the belt of truth.

In that day, the Roman soldier wore a tunic. It was a loose fitting, square piece of cloth with three holes – one for the head and two for the arms – that hung down to mid-thigh. When they were ready to move, and mobility was a necessity, they would take the corners of that tunic and tuck them into their leather belt at all four corners. This action meant that they were prepared; they were ready.

Paul is saying, “Be ready in your mind and have your mind girded with truth.”

Why do we need truth so desperately? We have studied this a little, so let me review.

Satan counterfeits the truth with his own church. Revelation 2:9 talks about the “synagogue of Satan”. He has his own ministers, his own gospel, his own doctrine. I Timothy 4:1 talks about the “doctrines of devils”.

Jesus Christ prayed for believers, as recorded in John 17:17, saying,

Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth.

Turn II and III John and take a look at John’s words. In fact, underline the word “truth” every time he uses it. Look at II John 1:1-4a.

The elder to the chosen lady and her children, whom I love in truth; and not only I, but also all who know the truth,

for the sake of the truth which abides in us and will be with us forever:

Grace, mercy and peace will be with us, from God the Father and from Jesus

Christ, the Son of the Father, in truth and love.

I was very glad to find some of your children walking in truth . . .

Look at III John 1:1, 3-4.

The elder to the beloved Gaius, whom I love in truth . . .

For I was very glad when brethren came and testified to your truth, that is, how you are walking in truth.

I have no greater joy than this, to hear of my children walking in the truth.

How important is this? It is all important. It is the foundation in our battle. It is the piece of equipment to which everything else is attached. We must be able to rightly divide the what? The truth. (II Timothy 2:15)

2. The second piece of the armor of God is the breastplate of righteousness.

Look at Ephesians 6:14b.

. . . and having put on the breastplate of righteousness,

The breastplate, in this day, was made of bronze and covered with leather hide. It provided a covering for the soldier from the neck down to the thighs and protected his most vital organs – the heart, lungs, testicle organs, etc. So when Paul says to “put on the breastplate of righteousness,” what is he talking about?

Look at Philippians 3:9.

and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith,

This does not seem like a fair exchange – we give God our sin and He gives us His righteousness. However, that is exactly what happened. He clothed us in the righteousness of Jesus Christ at salvation.

Why do we need to strap on this piece? What is Paul saying about having it? He is saying, “I want you to go into battle with the awareness that you are clothed in the righteousness of Christ because Satan is going to attack you, as he attacks everyone, at your points of failure.”

Satan is going to tell you, “You are a failure.”

What do you need to do? Remind him, “You’re right, but I’m fighting you, not on the basis of my righteousness and my successes, but on the basis of the righteousness of Jesus Christ.”

Let me draw a word picture of the way this battle happens in your life. I do not know the details of your life, but I know it happens to you in the same way it happens to me.

The first thing that happens is that Satan comes along, or one of his underlings, and cooperates with your flesh and you fail or you sin. So what do you do? You turn to God and say, “God, I know I’ve done something wrong. I know I have sinned and I ask You to forgive me. I want to thank You now for forgiving me at the cross for this sin.”

You then, get up from your knees and you are refreshed and encouraged and are able to go back into the battle. Two days later, what happens? You sin again in the same area. This time you turn to God and say, “Lord, I’m so embarrassed to be coming back to You two days later asking You to forgive me for the very same thing that I asked You to forgive me for two days ago. I want to thank You because I know You forgive me and I appreciate that. In Jesus’ name, amen.”

You get up from your knees, just a little slower, and you go back into the battle, just a little more timid. What happens two days later or two hours later or two minutes later? You sin again in the very same area. This time, you do not turn to God right away. You are mortified; you are embarrassed to go back again to Him for the very same thing. It takes you two days to finally grovel up to God on your knees and say, “Oh, Lord, I am so sorry for that. I am such a failure.”

You spend five minutes talking about yourself. Finally, you get around to saying, “Will You please forgive me?”

Then, you add this note, “I promise You, I’ll never do it again.”

Uh-oh! This is like letting out a battle cry to the forces of hell. Now you have set up a standard of performance whereby you are going to receive a sense of worth; a sense that you deserve forgiveness on the basis of how you live. So what happens? Two minutes later, you sin again. Then Satan comes along and says, “That’s it. That’s it. God can forgive you, but He can’t forget how unreliable you are. He can’t use you.”

At that moment, do you know what you need to do? You need to say, “Satan, you are absolutely right – one of the few times you are. But I’m here and I’m covered with the righteousness of Jesus Christ. I am clothed all about with the fact of His perfectness and His righteousness.”

Be careful, ladies and gentlemen, about setting up standards of performance. As soon as you say, “God, I promise . . .,” watch out! That is an invitation to say, “Hey, all of you underlings, attack right here.”

Let me share the story of going to the prayer room while I was in college. At the time, I was going to a small Christian college of about 5,000 students. We would hear men come and preach. They would talk about the way they got up at 5 o’ clock in the morning to pray for an hour or so. I remember listening and thinking, “Man alive, I want to impress God like that too. I’m going to get up a 5:00.”

If you know me, I am not a morning person. I hate the sunrise – I love the sunset. So, I set my alarm as a college student, and I headed across that campus, while it was still a little bit dark, and I climbed the stairs to the bell tower of the chapel. There was a room in the chapel that contained nothing but kneeling benches. I went in there and prayed. The whole time I was praying, I was thinking, “God, I must be worthy of Your love now; I must be really impressive to You now.” I would go there morning after morning, and there were a couple of other guys there as well. I would walk in and look at the other guys and think, “There are only three of us spiritually mature enough to pray like this in the morning.”

The truth is, the spiritually mature were enjoying another hour of sleep. Do you know what happened when I failed; when I slept through the alarm and half of my morning classes because I had gotten so tired? I thought, “Oh no, I’m not usable now. God can’t be impressed.”

We are going to have to continue this discussion of the armor of God in our next session.

Ladies and gentlemen, we live our Christian lives – and the sooner we learn this, the better – not on the basis of impressing God or earning His worth, or His love, or His forgiveness, but clothed in the breastplate of righteousness. In Christ, He loves us. We are told, in fact,

. . . while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. (Romans 5:8b)

How many of your sins were still future when He died for you? How many of your failures? All of them.

Some of you are probably thinking, “So, what are you saying, Stephen? Should we go out and just live a sinful life and hoop-hurrah?”

No. God forbid, as Paul wrote, that we ever use His grace to live a life of license. (Romans 6:15)

However, when we battle Satan, we go in the power of Jesus Christ and His righteousness.