



UNIT 5 EPHESIANS LESSON 10

“FOURTH CHARGE: PUT ON THE ARMOUR OF GOD”

STUDY PASSAGE: Ephesians 6:10-20

In the outline we have followed, the Epistle has been split into two main sections; i.e., Doctrine, chapters 1-3 and Ethics, chapters 4-6. However, perhaps it would be more helpful to consider this section we now come to, as a third section, that deals with the inner struggle of the Christian with the invisible, yet very real, forces of evil.

THE ENEMY

Identified as an individual in v11 - the devil, and v16 -the evil one, and as evil forces in v12.

"The devil" is the name used in the New Testament to identify:

- a) The tempter and enemy of Christ; Matthew 4:1ff; Luke 4:ff; Matthew 13:39.
- b) The enemy and deceiver of men; Luke 8:12; John 13:2; 1 Peter 5:8.
- c) The source of evil; John 8:44.
- d) The serpent; Revelation 12:9, 20:2.

The "evil one" is given as an obvious alternative in Matthew 13:9,38 ; John 2:13,14; 1 John 5:18.

In Mark's version of the temptation, he is called "Satan" and is thus identified with the evil power who provoked and tempted God's people in the Old Testament. Verse 12 tells us that our enemy is a great evil force under the direction, the context would seem to indicate, of the devil. That Satan has some spiritual dominion over the world is also suggested by the temptation of Jesus, and numerous other New Testament references; e.g., Luke 4:6; Acts 26:18; Ephesians 2:12; Colossians 1:13; 2 Thessalonians 2:9; Hebrews 2:14.

THE CHRISTIAN'S WARFARE

1. Spiritual rather than physical

Verse 12 tells us we are not contending against flesh and blood, but against wicked spiritual forces in the heavenly world. Foulkes says, "Indeed as the Christian's life has been described as raised above this material world to 'the heavenly places' where he (or she) lives in Christ (2:6), so this spiritual conflict is there, and it is this (the) spiritual possession there (1:3) of which the powers of evil would try to rob him (the Christian)." (page 173)

This, of course, does not mean that this warfare will not touch our physical life, or that sometimes Satan will not attack us through other people. It is referring to the ultimate reality of our warfare.



2. Personal

The word “contending”, or fighting, in verse 12, gives stress to the personal nature of the conflict. It's not that we are in an impersonal battle between good and evil, but that each of us is engaged personally, like wrestlers, with the enemy.

3. It is an ongoing battle

Never make the mistake of thinking that you have won; the battle still goes on. This is brought out in verses 10 and 13. In verse 10, "build up your strength" is in the continuous tense. Not just "be strong" for a battle, but "be strong" for the war.

In verse 13 it says, “and having done everything, to stand firm”. The meaning of this is that after we have done great things for the Lord, we should continue to stand. Compare this with the fear of Paul in 1 Corinthians 9:27.

4. Deliberately put on the whole armour of God

Belt	Truth	Best thought of as personal integrity, although it could refer to the truth of the Gospel.
Breastplate	Righteousness	Most commonly thought uprightness of character, although some believe it refers to the “righteousness” imputed to us.
Shoes	The readiness	The purpose of shoes in battle was to give the soldier a firm footing in fight. The Gospel is what can give the Christian such a firm footing. Not the feeling of peace, but the Gospel of peace.
Shield	Faith	Reliance on God.
Helmet	Salvation	Can be thought of in three aspects the hope of final deliverance, God's saving help now, and the salvation we have received from the penalty of sin. Foulkes comments, "Without that hope to fortify, without the present deliverance, and the confidence of rescue from the bondage of the past, the Christian may easily be mortally wounded in the conflict." (page 176)
Sword	The Word of God	Foulkes notes "The reference is not only to Scripture, but to all 'words that come from God' (NEB) by His Spirit; we, however, naturally think primarily of the Bible as the Word of the Spirit" (page 177). Hebrews 4:12 also talks about the word of God being a Sword.

**5. Pray**

Verse 18 - Pray in the Spirit, cf 2:18
 - Pray with discipline

Verses 18,19 - Pray also to assist others in their warfare

THE CONCLUSION

Verses 21 and 22 contain a very brief personal message which shows something of the man, Paul. Then follows a greeting typical of Paul, and which, using as it does the great words "peace, love, faith, grace", is a fitting prayer for the readers of this epistle, that has said so much about them.

QUESTION 1:

In Ephesians 6:11-13, who is the enemy against whom Christians are encouraged to "stand"? Look up the references given in the notes and use any you need in this answer.

QUESTION 2:

Paul says to put on the "helmet of salvation" as part of our armour (Eph. 6:17). What do you think he means by it?

QUESTION 3:

What does Paul have to say about the "sword" as part of the Christian's armour (Eph. 6:17b)? What else can we learn about it from Hebrews 4:12? What does this mean in practice?

QUESTION 4:

In Ephesians 6:18-20, the readers are urged to use another "weapon" which is not included in the analogy of the armour. What is it? What does Paul say about it? Why do you think a concrete picture is not given in this case?

QUESTION 5:

What do you learn about Paul personally from his remarks in Ephesians 6:18-20?

QUESTION FOR GROUP STUDY

How would you describe the conflict in Ephesians 6:10-20 in terms of your own experience? Try to put the figurative language into real terms.