

Lessons Learned from

The Book of Ephesians

Spiritual Warfare

Book 3



Alaska Christian Ministry to Seafarers

Vistoso Community Church

Sermon Series

Spiritual Warfare

Book 3

**We have an enemy,
and he's both real and powerful!
Our only hope is to be strong in the Lord,
and the power of His might!
And put on the full armor God provides—
every piece of it!**

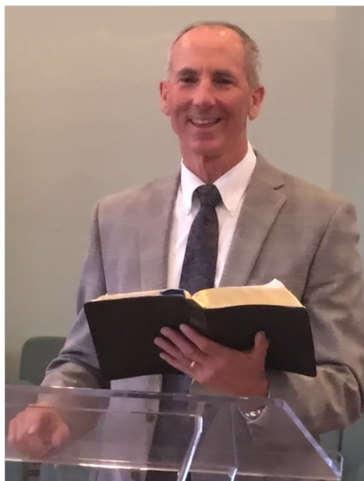
All Scripture quotes have been taken from either the
NIV (1984 edition) or the NKJV (1992 edition).

First Edition

March, 2019

Foreword

If we come to God's Word with a preconceived idea of what we are going to find and how long it is going to take to understand it, we are often going to be in for a surprise. That is exactly what happened to me when I came to the closing verses of the book of Ephesians. I had forgotten that the Word of God is an inexhaustible *gold mine* of truth for the child of God.



Thus far we have gained a better understanding of our enemy and the conflict in which we are engaged. For that reason, it is no surprise that we need to be *strong in the Lord* and in the *power of His might*. In order to facilitate our doing so, God has provided a number of means which can be nicely summarized by the armor of the Roman soldier of Paul's day. We are in the midst of our study of the armor, which will be followed by something unexpected to conclude our study. We left off with a discussion of the shield of faith and pick up in this book with the helmet of salvation. I trust you will continue to be challenged and blessed by the content of God's Word.

In His grace,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kevin Redig". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, stylized "K" and "R".

Kevin Redig

ARMOR OF GOD

EPHESIANS 6:10-18

The Helmet of Salvation

Put on the Helmet of Salvation by believing that Jesus Christ died for your sins and rose again.

The Breastplate of Righteousness

Righteousness is being honest, good, humble, and fair to others. It means standing up for weaker people.

The Shield of Faith

Faith is being sure that God will keep His promises. Faith in God protects you when you are tempted to doubt.

The Belt of Truth

Truth keeps us from giving in to world's beliefs. Compare your beliefs and action to the truth of the Word of God.

Feet Prepared with the Gospel of Peace

The Gospel of Peace is being right with God and being contented in troubled times. Jesus said, peacemakers were blessed.

The Sword of the Spirit

which is the Word of God. God's Word is our offensive weapon. When we tell others about the Bible says, the Holy Spirit helps people see their bad thoughts and actions, and makes them want to be forgiven.



The Armor of God

Ephesians 6:14-18

After a significant amount of preparation in Book 1, and a partial discussion of the components of the *Armor of God* in Book 2, we will be dealing with the remaining pieces of equipment in this book: the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit. Then, we will conclude this book with an important topic—Prayer as part of the spiritual battle—and an epilogue for this series on *Spiritual Warfare*.

The Helmet of Salvation

. . .and take the helmet of salvation. . .

Ephesians 6:17

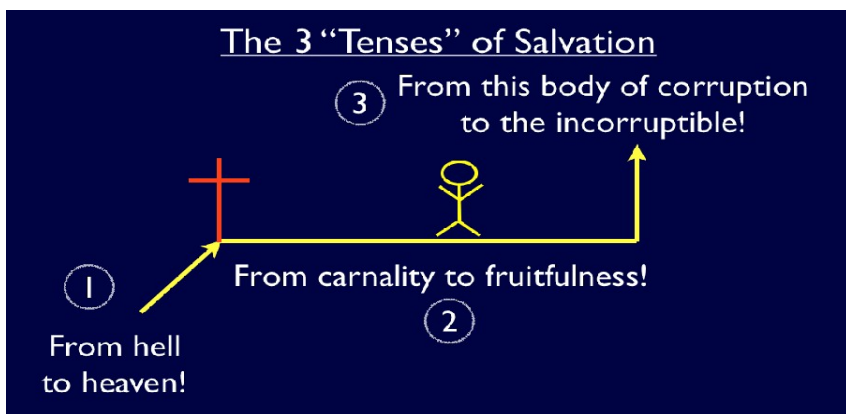
Like the shield, we are told to *take up* this piece of equipment. For, it too was carried as part of a soldier's gear, and put on when needed. Consider the question, "What is salvation?" Were we to discuss this question, we would hear all kinds of answers, most of which would center around the idea of going to heaven forever. I don't think this is what Paul had in mind when he matched it with a soldier's helmet. For to see our salvation in these terms is to have a totally inadequate view of what has been accomplished in the past, what God desires to be doing in the present, and what He has in store regarding the future.

The Scriptures declare, and God intends for us to stand firm in, much, much more! For, if you have placed your faith in the person and work of Christ, then I trust you are aware your salvation has three distinct components:

1. **First**, a change in eternal destiny from hell to heaven that we often associate with justification.

2. **Second**, the call to redeem the time so that we might be delivered from carnality to fruitfulness—a reference to ongoing sanctification.
3. **Third**, and lastly, salvation from this body of corruption to one that is incorruptible—our glorification.

We often illustrate this concept as the three tenses of salvation as shown on the diagram below.



What Should We Be Doing?

When we are told to put on the helmet of salvation as part of our standing against the wiles of the Devil, here are the kinds of things we should be doing:

1. **First tense.** With respect to what happened at the point we placed our faith in Christ, we should be thinking about these kinds of things: eternal life, redemption, justification, reconciliation, being a new creation in Christ, having eternal security, having an eternal inheritance, being seated in the heavenly realms with Christ, being accepted in the Beloved, having the indwelling of the Spirit, being part of the elect, and many more. All of these are meant to be understood as part of our preparation for the angelic conflict.

2. **Second tense.** With respect to our salvation in the present time, we are told to: redeem the time, abide in Christ, be holy, imitate God, walk worthy, be His witnesses, bear fruit, reflect His glory, and be transformed. Of course, we know that this is only a partial listing. How can we possibly do all of this? By appropriating what God has provided: the filling of the Spirit, His great and precious promises, our identification with Christ, the greatness of His power, the Law of the Spirit of Life, and the fact that He completes what He undertakes to do. All of these need to be taken up and put on as part of our readiness.

Notice that these are not things that are necessarily settled or static. In no case have we arrived. Instead, we need to be fully engaged in the process or we are out of the will of God. The Christian Life is not a self-centered, all-about-me-kind of life. It is one with deep meaning and purpose that we most certainly need to put on!

3. **Third tense.** Lastly, we need to put on an understanding of our future glorification, the fulfillment or consummation of our salvation. We need to know that we will: See Him as He is; know Him fully even as we are fully known; be in the company of saints; be conformed to His image; and have a resurrection body like His, having overcome the last enemy—death.

We need to be aware of all this so that we might reign and rule with Him, being with Him where He is, sharing in His glory.

I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us.

Romans 8:18

Rejoice, God Is Faithful

I hope the light bulb is going off! Paul wants us to be thoroughly familiar with the so-great salvation that is ours in Christ. This knowledge will help us to stand in the evil day, for nothing shall separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus! These are aspects of our salvation that are certain, but many of them are not yet our experience—we are to look forward to them. These assurances and expectations should be part of our hope, for they are certain because our God is faithful.

We can rejoice in them though we currently only see them through the eyes of faith and from a distance.



The Sword of the Spirit

And take . . . the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God. Ephesians 6:17

As with several of the other pieces of armor, this final piece of the armor is to be taken up as needed. For, in the same way a soldier would draw his sword from its scabbard, we need to bring the Word of God to the fore as circumstances demand.

Let's connect the *sword* with the *belt of truth*. The belt is the body of truth in which we believe. It is His revelation to us, a collection of His ways, His thoughts, and His affections. Then, the sword of the Spirit is the specific truth suited to circumstances. In other words, we need to know more than the scope of what the Bible has to say—the *belt of truth*—we need to be able to make specific and proper application of that truth.

Jesus Uses the Sword

There is no better example than our Lord's response to the temptation of Satan. Consider Matthew 4:1, 3-4:

Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted by the devil. . . The tempter came to Him and said, "If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread."

Jesus answered, "It is written: Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God."

Consider how Jesus responds. Satan attacks a legitimate human appetite, and Jesus responds, "*It is written. . .*" This could actually be translated "It stands written" for the Greek grammar speaks of something that is perpetuated through time. So, although God communicated this to Moses back in Deuteronomy 8:3, Jesus treats it as if it is perfectly applicable in His day. And, it is, just as it is perfectly applicable in our day too! Jesus doesn't consider the Bible to be a dusty tome, but something alive and powerful. (Hebrews 4:12) Jesus brings the sword of the Word of God into play with perfect facility. Some may question why Jesus is using the Word of God rather than His own power to dismiss Satan.

As An Example for Us

I would like to suggest that Jesus is establishing a pattern for us to follow.

For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. . .

II Corinthians 10:3-4

These strongholds are the way the world thinks, which is in opposition to the plans and purposes of God. How do we demolish the wrongheadedness of world viewpoint?

We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, (We do this by holding every thought up to scrutiny against God's Word.) and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.

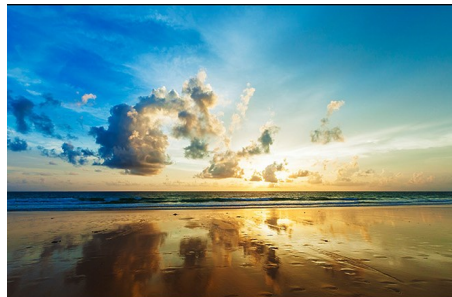
II Corinthians 10:3-5

This is not obedience to Christ in some abstract sense; but rather obedience to the content of the Word of God, which is the *mind of Christ*.

There is much more that could be said about the sword of the Spirit, but in reality that is what we have been doing since we began this study.

Week after week, as the

Word is preached, we are doing *sword drill*! We have covered every aspect of the armor of God by going into detail concerning what God's Word says. But, there is one more thing to cover—the topic of prayer.



"For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ."

1 Corinthians 2:16 (KJV)

Praying as Part of the Spiritual Battle

. . .praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints. . .

Ephesians 6:18

Although the armor metaphor has run its course, the discussion on spiritual warfare has not! So then, what does this last reference to prayer teach us about the spiritual battle? Let's begin by extracting a few things from the text:

- The phrase *praying always* is a longer phrase in the Greek, and actually encourages us to communicate with God all the time and in all circumstances.
- The phrase *prayer and supplication* prompts us to question the difference between the two. Let me suggest that *prayer* emphasizes our privilege in coming directly to God, and should include praise and thanksgiving. Supplication focuses on specific needs.

Being *in the Spirit* is an essential part of prayer. It is not about our eloquence, repetition, or even our level of spiritual growth that constitutes effective prayer. What is necessary is that we be the children of God and in fellowship with Him. We do this as we daily abide in Him, keep short accounts with respect to sin, and do not let unconfessed sin accumulate in our lives.

I also think this can be a reference to trusting the Spirit as our advocate to pray on our behalf, for:

. . .the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express.

Romans 8:26

6:18 With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints,



In short, we should always come to God filled with the Spirit, and trusting in the Spirit to minister to God on our behalf, for there are times when we can do little else than simply allow Him to intercede for us.

- *Being watchful* (*be on the alert* in the graphic translation above) is used as a watchman who is alert while others sleep. This is in contrast to how easily prayer time falls by the wayside when our schedules become crowded.
- Then, *for all the saints*. . . is a reminder how important prayer can be in getting our eyes off of self and engaged in beseeching God on behalf of others.

If I were going to paraphrase the discussion of this verse, it would be something like this:

Talk with the Lord! Make it a habit to do so all the time and in all circumstances. Do so with praise, thanksgiving, and intercession before getting down to the serious business of specific petitions. Make sure to be filled with the Spirit when you pray, as well as trusting in the Spirit's own ministry on your behalf. Pray as an ever-vigilant watchman, who does not

grow weary. Pray for the saints in general and by name, for you know that your brothers and sisters are undergoing the same trials and temptations that you are. Never forgetting:

...the effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.

James 5:16

Application

Now that we have considered the text, let's make some application.

1. **Not an accident.** Appending this powerful admonition regarding prayer to the armor of God metaphor is no accident or change of subject. First, it is to keep us from treating the armor in some kind of mechanical or formulaic manner. It is not a magic formula or something we can recite. You see, even perfect orthodoxy cannot protect us if we are not in a vital relationship with our Lord and relying on the power of His might!
2. **Jesus prayed.** We find a premium on prayer in the life of Jesus that does not seem to be a normal part of Christian practice in our day. Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed. See Luke 5:16, Mark 1:35, Matthew 14:23, Luke 6:12, 22:41-44, among others.
3. **We need it more.** Should we seriously think we can get by with less praying? For here we have the second person of the Trinity, in union with the Father, in perfect relationship with the Spirit, and with a perfect knowledge of the Word of God—and still Jesus often withdrew to pray. Is it possible that Luke 18:1 is a wide-spread and undiagnosed problem in our day?

Then Jesus told His disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not faint.

If so, that would explain why Acts 6:4 sounds so strange to our ears:

"We (the Apostles) will turn this responsibility over to them and will give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the Word."

How often do church congregations say, "Pastor, we want you to do less of _____, and spend more time in prayer." Or coming at it from another angle, how often have you turned down a social engagement, skipped watching the game, or didn't play golf because you felt the need to be in prayer?

4. **Our weapons.** It is often taught, as part of a study of the *armor of God*, that the believer's only offensive weapon is the Word of God (the sword of the Spirit). Is this really true in context? As a local body of believers, fully armed, in enemy territory, we are to be constantly in communication with the sovereign God of the universe. Among other matters we might bring to the Lord, we should most certainly be asking Him to move His hand in the lives of those missionaries with whom we have a personal relationship. That means we are asking Him to reach into Africa, and Turkey, and Mexico, and any number of other places. Prayer is much more of an offensive force than we realize.

Many do pray regularly. But, we have forgotten the corporate nature of prayer. This passage is meant to remind us that we are to be a praying church. For:

No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; He will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, He will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.

I Corinthians 10:13

Think back through this verse carefully! Do you see the immense opportunity for corporate prayer to hold up not only those in our own fellowship, but again our missionaries and even our extended families.

5. **Clarification.** Let me try to clear up one area of confusion regarding prayer. Let's start with four different pieces of divine direction in the area of prayer:



Jesus said: **"Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours."** Mark 11:24

When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives. . . James 4:3

This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. I John 5:14

. . .pray always . . .in the Spirit. . .with all perseverance and supplication for the saints. . . Ephesians 6:18

Now what often happens when Christians come across the above passage in Mark 11 is that they treat it as if it is the only passage on prayer in the Bible. Then, they get frustrated when their prayers are not answered. The above passages must be brought together and harmonized with one another. Do you see reasons why prayer might not be answered? We may ask with the wrong motives, or what we are asking for

may simply not be in keeping with His will. We err when we assume that prayer is like a pre-paid Visa card or a blank check. It is much closer to a parent regulating snack time! The child may express his or her preferences for today's snack, but the parent is going to keep the overall best interests of the child in mind and make the final decision.

6. **Spiritually-mature prayer.** God has most certainly determined to move His hand in response to the prayers of His people to accomplish His purposes to His glory! How should we respond to that? The short answer is: pray as much as possible, in keeping with the known will of God; do so from a position of Divine Viewpoint; and argue for God's glory, reputation, and will. That is a spiritually-mature kind of prayer, and I remind you:

The effectual, fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.

James 5:15 (KJV)

Numbers 14 contains an excellent example for us. For, after God has supernaturally brought the Jews out of Egypt and to the Promised Land, they treat Him with such contempt that God tells Moses He is going to destroy the nation and start over. Moses pleads with God, and in particular brings forth what it will do to God's reputation among the pagan nations if the Israelites are destroyed. God relents and instead decrees discipline. How does that work? Can God really change His mind? God has determined to move His hand in keeping with the *effectual* (right viewpoint), *fervent* (from the heart) prayer of those who are abiding in Him. We should rejoice that it works this way and leave no prayer unsaid as prompted by the Spirit of God and the Word of God—and then leave it in the hands of our infinitely wise and capable God.

The Closing Verses of Ephesians

These are the closing verses of the Book of Ephesians:

Peace to the brethren, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Grace be with all those who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. Amen.

Ephesians 6:23-24

Paul is passing on the peace and love of the Father and the Son to this group of believers. They are believers because they have faith in who Jesus is and what He has done for them. As a result of believing, they are now seated with Christ in the heavenly realms, washed with the Blood of the Lamb, and accepted in the Beloved. And, daily they are able to walk worthy of who they are in Christ by the enabling power of the Holy Spirit and the guiding light of the Word of God. Furthermore, they are standing shoulder to shoulder with other like-minded believers, engaged in the battle, praying for the saints, keeping the faith.

God's grace comes to those so engaged! More importantly, they have put themselves in a position to receive God's grace! And all God's people said, "Amen!"



Epilogue

I have shared everything I could on the topic of spiritual warfare from the text of Ephesians 6. But I have one more concern that weighs upon me, and I would like to append it to this booklet as something you might consider further. You see many Christians enter the spiritual battle completely unaware, and in no time are casualties. This grievous lack of readiness is highlighted in the following:

Nothing is more fatal than to start in the Christian life with the notion that now we are Christian we have finished with all our difficulties and problems. . . The New Testament rather gives the impression that because we are Christians we must expect attacks upon us in a way that we have never known or realized before. But thank God, we are not only told that we have to wrestle and fight in this way, we are also told how we can be enabled to do so successfully.

Tony Jones

To address this problem has been the purpose of this series of booklets. However, this concern with spiritual warfare, and, in particular, the power that comes against us, can be taken too far. For, after studying our foe in this spiritual conflict, it is possible for Satan, his forces, and his plans to loom too large in our thinking. We can develop a certain paranoia where behind every sniffle, every trial, every problem in our lives, Satan starts to loom large—too large!

My brothers and sisters in Christ, this should not be so. For, if we know our foe, we should know our friend far better. I refer to the Lord Jesus Christ—sovereign and Savior. He and He alone should dominate our thinking.

For we are admonished to:

Let us fix our eyes upon Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross. . . Hebrews 12:2

So what I am concerned about is an issue of balance and priority. Therefore, my goal for this epilogue is two-fold:

1. To show you the contrast between our Savior and our adversary.
2. To encourage you with the exalted status of our Lord and Savior.

The Contrast Between our Savior and Our Adversary

Isaiah 14 describes Satan's efforts to usurp God and establish his own dominion.

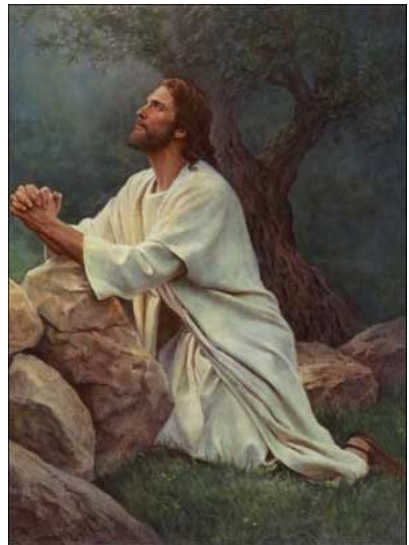
"I will raise my throne. . .I will sit enthroned. . .on the utmost heights of the sacred mountain. . .I will make myself like the most high." Isaiah 14:13-14

On the other hand, contrast Satan's arrogance with the Son's submission to the will of the Father:

"Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God." Hebrews 10:7

"I seek not my own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent Me."
John 5:30

". . .nevertheless, not My will but Thine. . ."
Matthew 26:39



So we find the creature who was made to respond to his Creator in a state of rebellion, while the Son of God, sovereign in His own right, is in perfect submission to the will of His Father.

SATAN
Accuser

THE LORD JESUS
Intercessor/Mediator

"For the accuser of our brothers, who accuses them before our God day and night. . ." Revelation 12:10

Who is this accuser, in context?

The great dragon. . .called the devil, or Satan.

Revelation 12:9

And, who is our protector against the accuser?

. . .we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. . .

I John 2:1

. . .able to save completely those who come to God through Him. . .He always lives to intercede. . .

Hebrews 7:25

For there is one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus who gave Himself a ransom for all men. . .

I Timothy 2:5

What a contrast! Does Satan intercede or mediate? On the contrary, he seeks to hold human beings in his dominion as pawns in his battle against God. And, part of his strategy against those who have left his dominion is to attack their standing *in Christ* through a constant stream of accusation, which, if we are not careful, can lead to debilitating guilt.

Here is a very simple self-test whenever we are discouraged about our failure. Ask yourself, "What is looming larger in my thinking: My sin or the finished work of the cross where my sins were paid for; my guilt which comes

from Satan or the intercessory mediatory work of the Lord Jesus Christ?" To frame the questions this way is to make it clear that there is only one answer! Was the work of Christ adequate? He sits at the right hand of the Father because our heavenly Father found it to be eminently so!

SATAN
Holds death over us

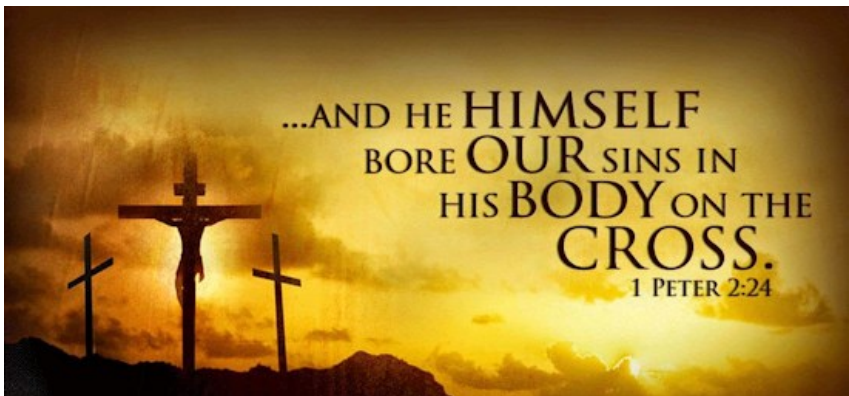
THE LORD JESUS
Died for us

. . .by His death He might destroy him who holds the power of death—that is the devil. . .and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death.
Hebrews 2:14-15

The passage is clear! Satan holds death over us. Lost people should fear death, but not those who have trusted in Christ!

While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

Romans 5:8



Furthermore, this was God's plan:

He who did not spare His own Son, but gave Him up for us all—how will He not also, along with Him, graciously give us all things.
Romans 8:32

Read these Scriptures carefully! Christ did the most for us by dying, then He and the Father added so *much more!* We have no more fear of death, for part of that *much more* is an eternal home which the Lord Jesus Christ Himself has prepared for us! What a Savior and what a so-great salvation, and what a contrast to the one whose only hold is death.

SATAN
A murderer

THE LORD JESUS
Loves us and
gave His life for us

Lost people are in Satan's domain. They are his subjects. Many choose to stick with him rather than turn to Christ. Why? For, as Jesus said:

"He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him."

John 8:44

On the other hand:

God so loved the world that He sent His only begotten Son. . .

John 3:16

And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son.

I John 5:11

Who are you going to trust with your eternity? The one who incited Cain to murder Abel and has been doing the same kind of thing ever since, or the One who loved you enough to bear your sin upon Himself and receive the punishment that was your due? He did this so that you might be reconciled to God and spend eternity with Him. If we really step back and look at what's at stake, to hold on to whatever we think this life has to offer in contrast to turning to faith in Christ is about as foolish and short-sighted as a person can be!

SATAN
Seeking
independence

THE LORD JESUS
Dependent upon
the will of God

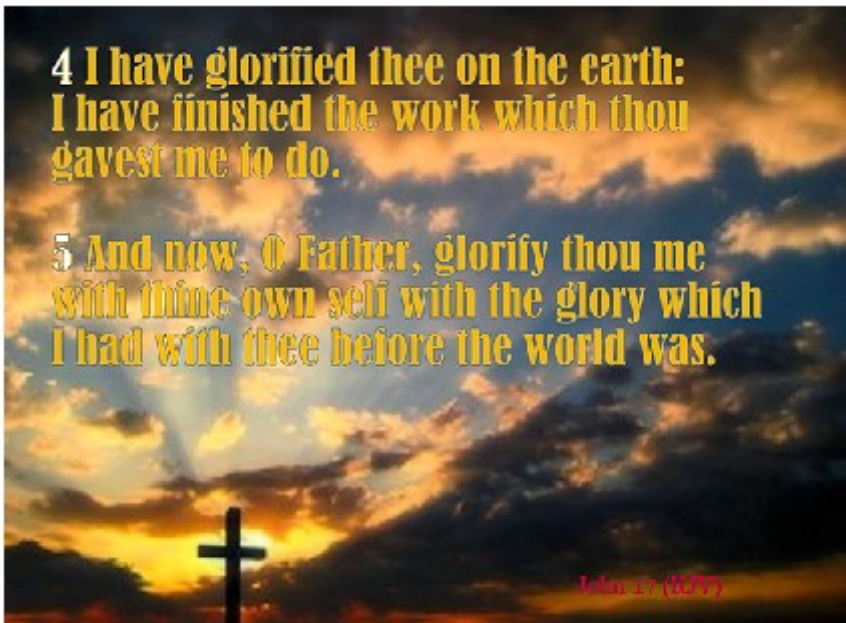
The devil is doing his own thing, pursuing his own diabolical agenda at our expense! That is why we need to be prepared to:

. . .stand against the wiles of the devil. Ephesians 6:11

On the other hand, what kind of attitude do we see exemplified by Christ during every aspect of His incarnation? Here are His own words to the Father:

"I have brought You glory on earth by completing the work You gave me to do." John 17:4

And, of course, the Lord Jesus set us this example so that we, too, would live in dependent obedience toward our heavenly Father.



The contrast between our Savior and our Adversary is the difference between night and day. So let me put the contrasts all together that you might ponder them. There are many, many more we could document, but this is more than enough to understand why we need to be on guard, and why the Lord is to be our refuge in times of trouble.

SATAN	THE LORD JESUS
I will	Thy Will
Accuser	Intercessor/Mediator
Holds death over us	Died for us
A murderer	Loves us/Gave His life for us
Seeking independence	Dependent on the will of God

When we choose to believe or reject Christ, we are making another kind of decision as well! Do you see it? We are choosing kingdoms and choosing sovereigns. Satan really has blinded the minds of unbelievers if there is even one single person on this earth willing to choose him over the Lord Jesus Christ. With this thought in mind, I want to encourage you with the exalted status of our Lord and Savior.

Our Savior's Exalted Status

To provide just a sampling, let's consider four points.

Jesus is the Great I Am!

Twenty-three times in the Gospel of John, Jesus says, "*I AM.*" Seven times, this statement is linked to further revelation about Jesus as Savior and Redeemer, such as:

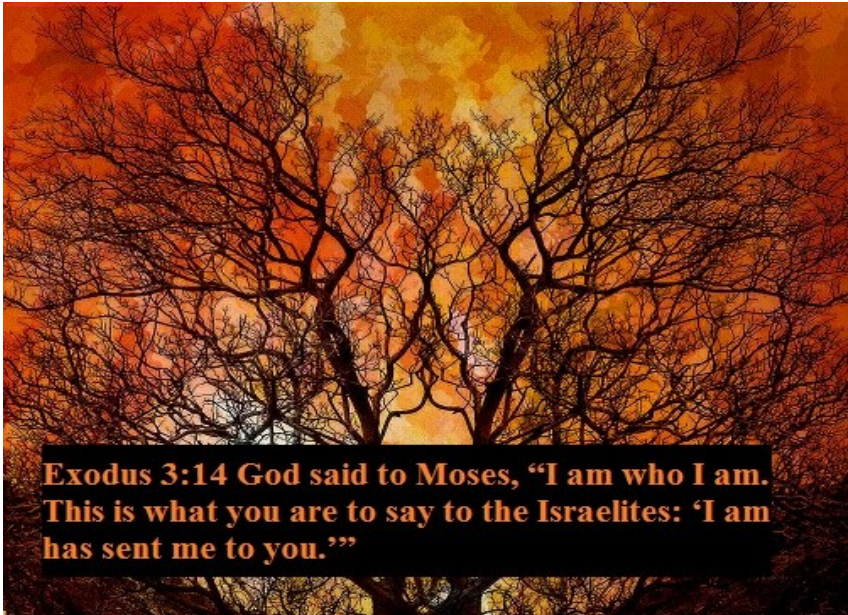
- I AM the bread of life (John 6:35)
- I AM the good shepherd (John 10: 11, 14)
- I AM the resurrection and the life (John 11:25)
- I AM the way the truth and the life (John 15: 1, 5)

Declaring Himself to be the, "*I AM*" takes us back to God speaking to Moses from the burning bush. When Moses asked God, in Exodus 3:13-14:

"Whom shall I say has sent me?"

God answered,

"Tell them 'I AM' has sent you."



Jesus is telling us, at a minimum, that He shares the Father's essence. Further, He is telling us that He was the Second Member of the Trinity who revealed the Father's will to Moses from the burning bush. Wrapped up in this short phrase, I AM, are the truths that Jesus is the self-existent One, He is self-determining and the Sovereign of the universe. Satan stands in great contrast. He is a creature and not a Creator. He didn't create his followers, his headquarters, or his earthly subjects. Instead he deceived and blinded them into following him. That's all

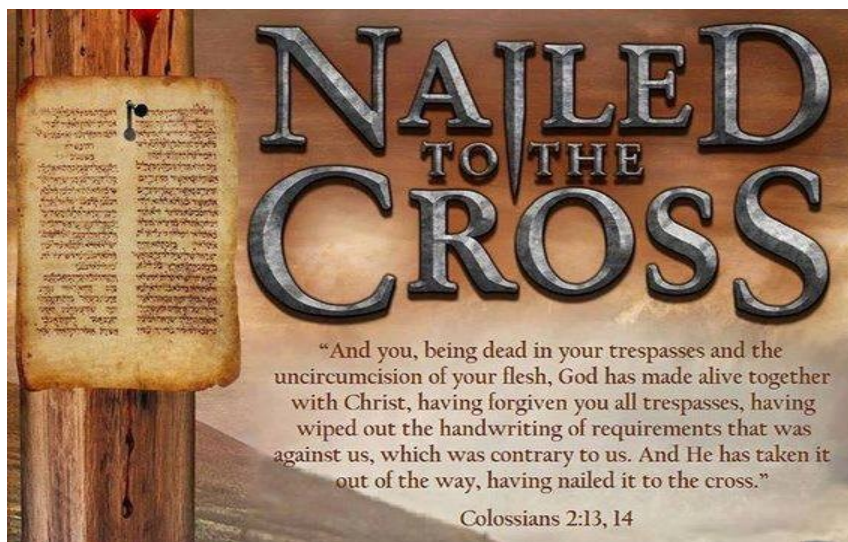
he can do! We must understand that there is a great gulf that cannot be bridged between the Creator and the creature—even one like Satan. The reality is, Satan is a created being who rules a dominion restricted by God’s sovereign timetable. Judgment has been decreed and history is moving towards its execution—and Satan is doing nothing more than executing a *scorched earth* policy!

Although He Came in Humility, He Nonetheless Wrought a Great Victory

The Scriptures make this very, very plain:

When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your sinful nature, God made you alive with Christ. . . having canceled the written code, with its regulations that was against us and that stood opposed to us; He took it away, nailing it to the cross. And having disarmed the powers and authorities, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.

Colossians 2:13-15



The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work.

I John 3:8



The Name of Jesus is Above Every Name

...He humbled Himself and became obedient to death—even death on a cross! Therefore God exalted Him to the highest place and gave Him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Philippians 2:8-11

Do you see how clearly the exalted status of Jesus is proclaimed in Scripture? Satan does not now have, nor ever will have, such a status. If we are going to be pre-occupied with anything, it needs to be the eternally-existent One, who has won a great and eternal victory, and has a Name at which every knee shall bow!

When Jesus Returns He Will Claim His Sovereign Status

When Jesus returns, at His Second Coming, it will no longer be as the *suffering servant*. He will return with a title suited to His sovereign status:

**I saw heaven standing open and there before me
was a white horse, whose rider is called Faithful
and True. . . On His robe and on His thigh He has this
name written: King of kings and Lord of lords.**

Revelation 19:11, 16



As Christians, we are involved in a great conflict, but we have the “right man on our side!” That is the point being made in this epilogue. The hymn-writer says it this way:

*For still our ancient foe
Doth seek to work us woe;
His craft and power are great,
And, armed with cruel hate
On earth is not his equal.*

*Did we in our own strength confide,
Our striving would be losing;
Were not the right Man on our side,
The Man of God's own choosing:
Dost ask who that may be?
Christ Jesus, it is He;
Lord Sabaoth, His name,
From age to age the same,
And He must win the battle.*

Martin Luther

Do you see the choice? It is possible to be overly preoccupied with our ancient foe and the carnage he seeks to sow in our lives. But that is most certainly not the intent of our study in Ephesians 6. We do indeed need to be aware of how Satan seeks to despoil us of the wealth we have in Christ, to lure us from our walk, and to distract us from our mission. But the right response is as clear as it could be: We are to turn to our Lord and Savior. For He is exalted above all else. He is a great victor, the Great I AM, the King of kings and Lord of lords, and the one with a Name above every name.

It is this One, Jesus Christ, who died for us, lives within us, and always lives to intercede for us. Revel in how this plays out in time:

No, in all these things (trouble, hardship, persecution, famine, danger, sword) **we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.**

Romans 8:37-39

In Closing

So, in closing, there is no more important question to answer for every member of the human race than, "Whose dominion are you in?"

We are born under the dominion of the one who is a rebel, deceiver, murderer, accuser, who holds death over the heads of his subjects. Some are unaware of their desperate situation, others like the niche they have found, and others falsely think there are other options. I can only suggest that he is no fool who accepts the offer to change kingdoms before it is too late.

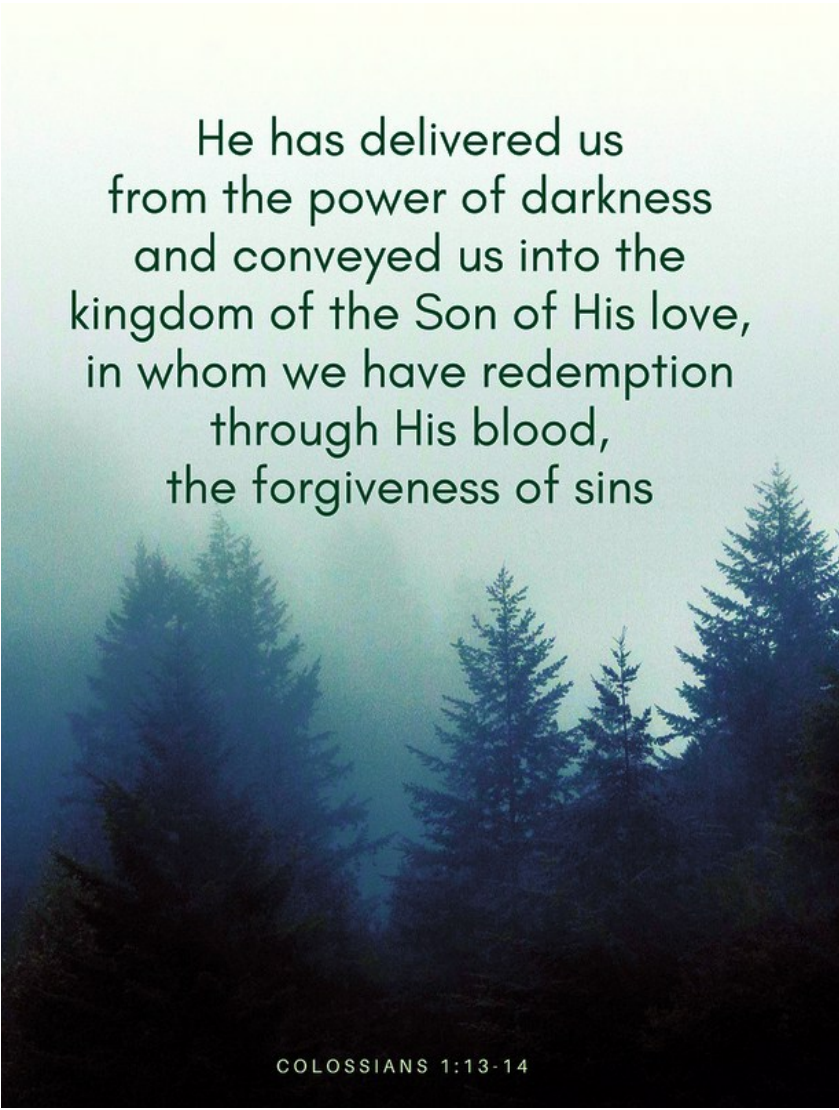
If you are wondering, how you can change kingdoms, the answer is everywhere in the New Testament. You change kingdoms by turning to Christ and placing your faith in who He is and what He did for you. For, He is the eternally existent Second Person of the Trinity, who took on our humanity in order to go to the cross in our place and pay the penalty for our sin.

All those who have placed their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, God has rescued:

. . .from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son He loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

Colossians 1:13-14

Make sure, on the authority of God's Word, that you know to which dominion you belong.

The background of the image is a photograph of a forest. In the foreground and middle ground, there are several tall, dark evergreen trees, possibly spruce or fir, their branches covered in snow or frost. The trees are silhouetted against a very light, hazy sky that transitions from a pale yellow at the top to a soft blue-grey near the horizon. The overall atmosphere is serene and quiet, with a sense of being deep within a wooded area on a cold day.

He has delivered us
from the power of darkness
and conveyed us into the
kingdom of the Son of His love,
in whom we have redemption
through His blood,
the forgiveness of sins

COLOSSIANS 1:13-14



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