

## Using Our Divine Resources to Defeat Our Spiritual Enemy #1

Daniel 10:13; Ephesians 6:10-18

August 20, 2023

Greg L. Price

I suppose what I am about to say is true of a nation or of an individual that is facing an enemy. To merely know who your enemy is and even to know his tactics/strategy in coming against you, but not to know how to defeat him will only lead to a sense of hopelessness. It would almost be better to be completely ignorant of the enemy and his tactics than to know them and to feel totally helpless to do anything to defend yourself against the enemy, let alone to defeat that enemy. Why resist the enemy if you have no resources to win? Why not simply surrender?

So far in our brief detour from the text in Daniel 10, we have identified from Scripture our spiritual enemy: the devil and his demonic forces. We have also noted from an overview of biblical revelation the temptations and tactics the devil uses against Christians to render them ineffective and to lead them to believe they are helpless in this spiritual battle.

But now our focus turns to the powerful resources God has given to us in Christ to defend ourselves against the enemy. This is the exciting part. Just as watching all of the misery and devastation in the world on news reports is depressing without the hope of the gospel; so likewise, hearing about the many ways the devil tempts us and succeeds so often is discouraging and depressing without the good news of Jesus Christ. That is where we are going in the remaining sermons dealing with this spiritual battle against this mighty enemy, the devil—the gospel of Jesus Christ, which is mighty to tearing down the enemy’s strongholds (2 Corinthians 10:4). We are not looking to peacefully coexist with this enemy, but by God’s grace and power to pull down all of his strongholds he has set up by way of temptations to lead us into sin, to rob us of joy, peace, and comfort, and to render us helpless in standing for Christ and His truth. Our main points are: (1) Standing against the Enemy (Ephesians 6:10-13); (2) Standing in Christ’s Victory Already Accomplished (Ephesians 6:10).

### I. **Standing against the Enemy (Ephesians 6:10-13).**

A. We were introduced in Daniel 10:13 to a spiritual battle between God’s holy angels (Gabriel and Michael) and a fallen angel, the “prince of Persia”. As we considered those verses, we saw a battle in the unseen world to influence King Cyrus either to show his disfavor to the Jews in hindering the rebuilding of the temple in Jerusalem (through the Samaritans in Ezra 4:4) or to show his favor to the Jews in supporting the work of rebuilding the temple.

1. This was a battle about which we would have known nothing if not revealed here for us (because it was a very real yet unseen battle in the spiritual world).

2. Though there is spiritual warfare that rages between Christ’s angels and Satan’s demons in seeking to influence kings and nations, this is also true in our personal lives as Christians. We are assured of victory in Jesus Christ (Romans 16:20).

B. The Apostle Paul certainly does not present the opposition we face against our spiritual enemy as merely a verbal disagreement, but rather as a real war. The enemy wants to destroy us, and he would if he could (i.e. if the Lord Jesus did not restrain him). Ephesians 6:10-13 clearly warns us that we cannot take this battle against this enemy lightly.

1. This is not just someone of flesh and blood that makes themselves our enemy—this is a spiritual enemy that we cannot see and that has supernatural power (Ephesians 6:12). That’s why we need to be spiritually ready and armed for battle at all times because he can strike at any time (Ephesians 6:11). He attacks not only when we are bodily weak or spiritually discouraged, but even when we do not feel vulnerable (Job felt strong before his temptation as did Peter; 1 Corinthians 10:12).

2. This is not a sloppy, lazy, disorganized enemy. His clear objective is to steal, kill, and destroy us and our effectiveness (“principalities” etc., Ephesians 6:12). This enemy needs no rest. While we are sleeping because we need rest, our enemy is plotting and planning those temptations against us because he needs no rest.

3. This is not an enemy that lets us know in advance and makes an appointment as to when he is going to attack us and how he will do so, but is crafty and deceitful and knows where our weaknesses are (“the wiles of the devil” Ephesians 6:11). He has a strategy to lead us into temptation and suggestions that will lure us away from Christ so that he can attack us. That is his success—leading us away from Jesus.

4. Let us understand that spiritual laziness, apathy, and lukewarmness are not neutral or indifferent in the Christian life, but are sins. Why? Because we are instructed by the Lord (through His apostle) 4 different times in Ephesians 6:11-14 to stand and withstand (resist) this enemy. This is not a suggestion or an option to stand and to resist. This is an order from our King Jesus to stand and to resist this enemy. To not do so is to sin against Christ and His Word.

a. **Ephesians 6:11:** “that ye may be able to stand (*histēmi*) against the wiles of the devil.” The implication here is that if we do not put on the “whole armour” of God (Ephesians 6:14-18), we will NOT be able to stand, but will fall before the enemy in temptation.

b. **Ephesians 6:13:** “that ye may be able to withstand (*anthistēmi*) in the evil day.” Once again, the implication is that if we do not put on the “whole armour” of God, we will fall in the evil day of temptation. This word adds *anti* (against) before the same word in Ephesians 6:11 (James 4:7; 1 Peter 5:8-9). To withstand and resist the enemy is to oppose him, to say, “No” to temptation, to flee to Christ, and to put on the whole armor of God.

c. **Ephesians 6:13:** “and having done all, to stand.” How do we stand against the enemy? “Having done all”, i.e. having done all in putting on the whole armor of God, then to stand.

d. **Ephesians 6:14:** “Stand therefore.” Paul now commands us to stand and tells us in Ephesians 6:14-18 how we are to stand and gain victory against the enemy in this spiritual war.

5. So our orders from King Jesus are summarized here by the words, “stand” and “withstand”. The picture is not of Christians going out to gain new territory for Jesus Christ, but rather that of standing and holding the territory in our lives, in our families, in our church, and in our country that Jesus has already won through His death, resurrection, and ascension. What territory has Jesus already legally won/conquered? All of it! He is Lord of all—whether your life, family, church, or nation—all are already His by divine/legal right. Stand there to the end and fight with all your might in the power of Jesus Christ to defend it for the glory of Christ. As you would spiritually fight for your own life against the enemy, so fight spiritually for your marriage against the enemy (don’t join hands with the enemy). As you would spiritually fight for your marriage, so spiritually fight for your church against the enemy (don’t work with him). As you would spiritually fight for your church, so spiritually fight for your nation against the enemy (don’t unite with him in seeing this as mere politics).

## II. Standing in Christ’s Victory Already Accomplished (Ephesians 6:10).

A. Paul wrote this letter to the Ephesian brethren from a Roman prison (Ephesians 3:1; 4:1). He spent the first three chapters explaining the doctrine of salvation and of our union as Jews and Gentiles together as one body in Christ. The last three chapters are devoted to practically applying the doctrine that has been taught (a good model to follow in sound preaching as well). As we come to Ephesians 6:10, Paul draws his words to a conclusion (“Finally my brethren”). There is a spiritual enemy that will work to hinder both doctrine and practice. But we are not helpless or hopeless in Christ. This is what I want to leave with you in this last main point today.

B. We cannot fight this battle against this enemy in our own strength. We will lose every time. We

must “be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might” (Ephesians 6:10). What does that imply?

1. It implies that Jesus has already won the victory over the devil and that it is by our union and communion with Him that we access His strength and power to overcome the enemy (“IN the Lord” and “IN the power of his might”).
2. It implies that Satan is actually the one that is helpless and hopeless, not us. Christ’s power and strength will tear down all the enemies strong holds (2 Corinthians 10:4). Jesus is Lord even over Satan—he does not willingly submit, but must submit to Christ’s power (as the demons did during the Lord’s earthly ministry).
3. It implies that by Christ’s death, resurrection, and ascension (enthronement) Jesus accomplished His victory as our Mediator (on our behalf) over Satan. Satan is already legally conquered and defeated even if he is permitted by the Lord to work before he is finally destroyed in hell (Colossians 2:15; Hebrews 2:14).
  - a. Just as we died with Christ to the dominion of the world and the flesh reigning over us, so we also died with Christ to the dominion of Satan reigning over us (Romans 6:1-2,6,14). In Christ’s death we have been set free from the guilt and power of sin and from Satan. The devil has no legal right to exercise dominion over us (any more than does the world or the flesh by way of our sinful desires). This is not a legal fiction just to make us feel better about our struggles with sin and temptation. This is a legal fact. We were united to Christ when He was crucified in order that sin and Satan might not have dominion over us.
  - b. Sadly, Christians either are ignorant of this truth or would rather believe what they feel rather than what God says about them (walking by feelings/sight and by Satan’s lies, rather than by faith in the truth of God who cannot lie). That which is legally accomplished by Jesus in His death, resurrection, and enthronement is the basis and ground for our experiential victory over sin and Satan in our lives and growth in Christ. That is where we must begin if we are to have hope in overcoming sin and Satan in our lives and in growing to be like Jesus.
  - c. By faith we are commanded (Romans 6:11) to legally account (or reckon) our sinful desires to be crucified (hanging like a dead corpse on the cross) and to be dead (lying in the tomb). How can Satan use our sinful desires when we by faith account them to be in a tomb with a huge rock blocking entrance to it? Let us not roll back the stone and allow Satan access to those sinful desires that died with Christ. Let us not take that dead corpse down from the cross and move that great rock from the tomb to take that putrefying body of sin from out of the tomb and carry it around on our back with us wherever we go, dragging it from one place to another for Satan to tempt and to use against us.
  - d. But the other necessary legal fact that we must embrace daily is that we were raised with Christ to new life (Romans 6:11). We live anew with Christ in two senses: legally, when Christ was raised from the dead we were raised with Him through our covenantal union with Him as He federally represented us (Romans 6:5); and spiritually, when the Holy Spirit made us a new creation in Christ (2 Corinthians 5:17).
4. If we continue only to look at our sins and temptations by the enemy, crying out to God, but not reckoning our death to sin and Satan to be legally true, and not reckoning our new resurrection life in Christ to be legally and spiritually true, we will walk about as if we are under the dominion of sin, temptation, and Satan.
5. Christ has made full provision for us. All our strength is in Christ. All our armor has already been purchased by Christ—we simply need to put it on. It does not need to be sought out by us or paid for by us. It is already ours in Christ. This is not the power of positive thinking. This is trusting in what Jesus has already accomplished. We can study the armor in Ephesians 6:14-18, but if we are not firmly anchored in Christ’s victory over Satan in His death, resurrection, and ascension, and our victory in Him, we will ever be struggling in putting on the armor as if it all depends upon us. Dear ones, you are not victims in Christ. You are victors and overcomers in Christ. Don’t believe the lie of the enemy. Daily put on the whole armor of God, but do so knowing you are already victorious in Jesus Christ. There is no hope if all we have is

the armor, but are not assured of victory in Jesus Christ. There is hope in overcoming the enemy because Jesus is already victorious and we are victorious in Him.

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