

CHAPTER FIVE - PART FIVE

BATTLING THE THREE ENEMIES OF GOD

“We know that we are of God, and the whole world lies under the sway of the wicked one.” (1 John 5:19)

Sometime in eternity past, God appointed Satan as ruler over the earth. Satan will continue holding this position until the Day when he is replaced by Man, that is, the Lord Jesus Christ and his co-heirs.

Satan’s fall brought about no change in his position as ruler, and no change will occur until the appointed time when Christ appears and is ready to take the scepter. The appointed time is set within the framework of the six days of work (6,000 years of redemptive work) followed by a Seventh Day of Rest (Seventh 1,000 year period—The Messianic Era) recorded in the beginning of **Genesis**. The beginning of this Seventh Day will mark Christ’s return, His victory over Satan, and his succession of the throne. And this was something known at a prior time when God designed and created the ages, a plan centered on His Son inheriting *all things* (**Hebrews 1, 2**). But until then, Satan rules over the earth, going to and fro, deceiving and tempting believers, trying to keep them from their journey.

But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, whose minds the “god of this age” [Satan] has blinded... (2 Corinthians 4:3, 4)

Satan and his fallen angels are said to reside in the “heavenly places:”

...to the intent that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places... (Ephesians 3:10)

These *principalities and powers in the heavenly places* refer to powerful fallen angels in the kingdom of Satan ruling the earth from a heavenly realm. Satan has an innumerable number of angels at his command who perform activities through counterparts within the human race on earth.

For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. (Ephesians 6:12)

There is a present warfare between *the rulers of the darkness of this age* and Christians. Satan and his demonic angels war against Christians because they know God's plans and purposes for them — to rule in Satan's stead, to exercise power and authority from the same heavenly realm where Satan presently rules. Therefore, these powerful angelic rulers are presently engaged in a battle against Christians.

Satan and his angels are striving for the souls of men and their means of doing so come in many forms. The crafty ways in which Satan and his angels use to deceive men are by seeking to counterfeit the work of God. Satan imitates God's work in order to deceive believers and to bring about their defeat. Through the work of the tares, these angelic rulers portray a form of godliness, but then deny its power. They twist the truth, lie and corrupt the Word of God. And Satan does this to disqualify man from ruling in the age to come.

Knowing this, a Christian must be properly prepared in order to resist the devil and consistently win the battle of spiritual warfare. Those not properly prepared will experience defeat, falling into the sway of the "wicked one." But if we are to stand before the Lord as an overcomer at His judgment seat, we will have to overcome each of the three great enemies of God — *the world, the flesh and the devil*. All of these three derive from the works of Satan. *Everything* that comes out of the world, the flesh and the devil is wicked and is of Satan. Nothing good dwells there. **The first of the three great enemies is *the world*:**

Do you know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. (James 4:4)

God says that if we are friends with the world, we are His enemy. Note that the word "world" is not referring to the globe in which we live as a physical entity, nor is this referring to humanity in a general sense, but

rather the present system of rulership over the earth and all that would be associated with that — from Adam to the end of *this age*. And therefore, everything connected with the present world system in this age is under the control of Satan and finds itself to be opposed to everything that is of God. This is the reason why faithful Christians are described as aliens and strangers in this world during this present time. Christians are living in enemy occupied territory.

Jesus answered, “My kingdom is not of this world.”
(John 18:36)

The Old Testament saints had acknowledged that they were spiritually separated from this earth:

These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off were assured of them, embraced them and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on this earth.
(Hebrews 11:13)

If we are not set apart from this world, then we are a part of it; hence, we are under the influence and rule of Satan. Furthermore, since there is a breakdown of powers in the heavenly kingdom under Satan that rules the earthly kingdom, any person occupying a position of power in the earthly kingdom during the present age is merely occupying a position of power under Satan and his angels, as they rule from the heavens through counterparts on the earth. Therefore, as pilgrims and foreigners on this earth, we are not to get involved in the political arena that is presently ruled under Satan, nor are we to get involved or associate ourselves in politics through the act of voting. In doing so, we would be involved with the things of this world. What a tragedy to invest our resources in what will not last. To be consumed with this life is to be unprepared for the next.

The present world system is passing away and from the time we are removed to the Judgment seat of Christ, nothing will be the same again and nothing we look to in this world will have any lasting value. Everything will be gone — governments, nations, education systems, the internet, television, our home, our cars, everything we possess will pass away. Therefore, our security or our hope or our future or that which we

desire is not to be for this world. Since we know that everything in this world is passing away and coming to nothing — why do we focus on how to fix the world or why do we try to control what is in the world?

“And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever. (1 John 2:17)

Rather, we are to have a correct mindset. We are to trust in the Lord and His plans for us, realizing that, *“The LORD is my helper; I will not fear. What can man do to me?” (Hebrews 13:6)*. Man is never in control of anything; it is the Lord who is in control of everything, and it is a surety that all things He has prophesied will come to pass.

The works of His hands are verity and justice; All His precepts are sure. (Psalm 111:7)

Christ testified that He was not of this world, and we also if we believe in all that He says, are not to be of this world either.

“You are of this world; I am not of this world. Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for if you do not believe that I am He, you will die in your sins.” (John 8:23, 24)

According to Scripture, all that is in the world, which is influenced by Satan, is *“the lust of the flesh,” “the lust of the eyes,” and “the pride of life.”*

Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world. (1 John 2:15, 16)

These three characteristics are not of God but of the world and therefore, of the “god of this world.” Satan’s intentions are to keep the Christian’s focus away from God and His plans for him, plans to give him a kingdom and replace Satan as ruler. We can make a distinct connection between the characteristics that Satan possessed when he fell away from God and those that are in the world today — *lust, envy and pride*.

Lust means “to covet, desire, to set the heart upon or long for.” The lust of the flesh therefore is setting our heart upon that which the “carnal” or flesh desires. We can translate this to mean, “I must have,” “I can’t do without,” “I will be happier if I have this.” But what does Christ say?

And He said to them, “Take heed and beware of covetousness [lust for anything], for one’s life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses.” (Luke 12:15)

Therefore, being carnally-minded would bring us to the wisdom of this world and of Satan as opposed to the wisdom brought forth from God.

Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be. (Romans 8:7)

The carnal mind [flesh] always goes against God’s commandments as its nature is to sin. Therefore, we could understand the lust of the flesh to be setting our hearts upon something which is other than God’s word, with the deception that in having this our happiness and security is attained. This may well be our experience without even realizing it. One may be deceived into thinking: “The more money, savings, houses, cars, entertainment, insurance, etc., the happier and more secure I will be.” Isn’t this how most carnal people think? Christ provides an example of this very thing in the parable of the rich fool:

“The ground of a certain man yielded plentifully. And he thought within himself, saying, “What shall I do, since I have no room to store my crops? So he said, ‘I will do this: I will pull down my barns and build greater, and there I will store all my crops and my goods. And I will say to my soul, “Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years, take your ease; eat, drink, and be merry.”

But God said to him, ‘Fool! This night your soul will be required of you; then whose will those things be which you have provided?’ “So is he who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.” (Luke 12:16-21)

We see a connection to this parable in **Matthew 16:26, 27:**

“For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? For the Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then He will reward each according to his works.”

Rather, Jesus tells us this:

“But seek first the kingdom of God, and all these things shall be added unto you.” (Matthew 6:33)

Second, we have the *lust of the eyes*. Now whereas the lust of the flesh has to do with covetousness with regards to material things, the lust of the eyes seem to deal with covetousness with regards to people.

You shall not covet your neighbor’s wife. (Deuteronomy 5:21)

This command may refer to inappropriate sexual desire, however this can also be viewed as envying someone because of who they are or what they have [in this world]. The thinking is this: “If only I could have what he has, or be like she is, then my life would be so much better.” This is the lust of the eyes, also known as *envy*. Do not be deceived into thinking that someone else’s pathway is easier than our own. Such thinking would be contrary to the evidence of Scripture, for Scripture repeatedly says that *all* Christians must go through trials and tribulations for the testing of their faith.

...strengthening the souls of the disciples, exhorting them to continue in ‘the faith’, and saying, “We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God.” (Acts 14:22)

We are to be content with what we do have and when trials come our way, we are to patiently endure, knowing that testings will strengthen us spiritually and help us to mature in Christ.

Last, we have *the pride of life*. Pride means “boastful, self-centered.” We could understand this to mean having a prideful, self-confidence in who we are and where we are at right now in this world, apart from any reference to who we are in Christ. A good example of this is shown in

Revelation 3:17 with the Church of Laodicea:

Because you say, 'I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing'—and do not know that you are wretched, poor, blind, and naked—[in Christ].

Pride keeps us focused on the things of this world; pride tells us that we do not need Christ in our lives, that we are in control of everything and that we are better than others. This was the pride that resulted in Satan's fall, as he put himself up on a pedestal above God and thought that he could be better. Rather, we are to have the opposite characteristic of pride, which is "meekness." The Greek translation for *meekness* (Strong's #G4236) is "*praotes*," which means "gentleness, humility, modesty." When one is meek he is not self-centered, but centers on the interest and care of others. As a "new man in Christ," this is how we are to act towards others, Christ being our perfect model.

Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering...
(Colossians 3:12)

Note what Jesus said about believers whose good works are done in meekness:

"Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth."
(Matthew 5:5)

Pride only promotes strife, but meekness promotes peace:

Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show by good conduct, that his works are done in the meekness of wisdom. But if you have bitter envy and self-seeking in your hearts, do not boast and lie against the truth. This wisdom does not descend from above, but is earthly, sensual, demonic. For where envy and self-seeking exist, confusion and every evil thing are there.

But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy. Now the fruit of righteousness is

sown in peace by those who make peace. (James 3:13-18)

Our actions will discover our condition on that future Day of the Lord. A self-check on our attitude would reveal how we are directing our attention to the Word of God [thereby directing our attention toward God Himself]. If we study the Word, we know Christ, because He is the Word. Studying the Word will transform our mind to know and do the will of God, for His glory and for our glory in the age to come. Focusing on Him will keep us from the things of this world and thereby from the lusts of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life.

And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God. (Romans 12:2)

The renewing of our mind replaces the mindsets and thought patterns that have a direct association with the things of this world and the god of this world, Satan. The Word, which is Life, will transform us from the “*old man*” to the “*new man in Christ*” and will take away the distractions, the deceptions of this world that tend to blind us and to crowd in on us from every direction throughout our day. This pressure of the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life is Satan’s way of corrupting the purity of our calling so that we should settle for much less than what God intends for us — glory in the kingdom with Christ for 1000 years. And which is better — to have eighty or ninety years of life in this age or 1000 years with Christ in the age to come? The answer of course is the latter, but then again, every individual has to make that choice for himself.

Many will rather heed the voice of Satan because it is an easier option to conform to this world than to walk in the Spirit, according to the Word of God. In several passages in Scripture, importance is given in setting the mind on things above, rather than things on the earth.

If you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. (Colossians 3:1, 2)

Setting our minds on things above relates to “the hope,” which is associated with the hope of an inheritance, the hope of ruling with Christ

in the kingdom of the heavens and of the salvation of our souls. When we possess this hope, we no longer set our minds on earthly things for we know they have no lasting value.

A Christian must exercise a two-fold process which brings him to a level of maturity. He must *set his mind on things above* [on the glorious appearing of the Lord Jesus Christ] and at the same time, he must *put to death his members* [die to self] *which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry (Colossians 3:5)*. This process will in time separate the believer from the world, from earthly things and bring him to desire the kingdom of the heavens.

But if a Christian refuses to be faithfully obedient to God's command concerning setting the mind on things above and dying to the flesh, and instead chooses to live for the world and to walk according to the flesh, he will make himself an enemy of God.

For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame—who set their mind on earthly things. (Philippians 3:18, 19)

There will be two types of Christians at the Judgment seat — overcomers and those who will be overcome. One of the two outcomes awaits each one of us and each one of us will find ourselves in front of Christ in one or the other of these two camps.

The second of the three great enemies of God is *the flesh*. The Greek translation (Strong's #G4561) for *flesh* is the word "*sarx*" which means "the body (as opposed to the soul or spirit), or as the symbol of which is external; a mortal being; carnal; carnally minded; fleshly."

The body is made up of flesh and bones; and of itself is not evil. The soul gives life to the body, because the soul, which means "life," is in the blood (**Leviticus 17:11**). In the beginning man was given an immortal body to house the soul and spirit. But after Adam's fall, the spirit died, the soul became corrupted and the body mortal. This brought about God's

redemptive act for man, involving the death of His Son; putting to death His flesh so He could take away our sins. We also are to put to death our flesh so we can put away our sins, for when *the body of flesh controls the soul (our desires and thoughts), it brings forth sin and consequently death in the age to come.*

But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires [the soul] and enticed. Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin [the flesh]; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death. (James 1:14, 15)

Therefore, since the flesh entices the soul, we are to put to death our fleshly desires and instead live in the Spirit. We need to put to death our way of thinking and instead think according to His Word. In this way, we can put away sin in our lives.

Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection, knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin... (Romans 6:4-6)

For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God. Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 6:10, 11)

Christ's bodily death and resurrection is a type of our death and resurrection. If we are in the likeness of His death, than we have separated our soul and spirit and have died to the flesh. Subsequently, we will be in the likeness of His resurrection. By choosing to live according to the indwelling Holy Spirit, we have a way in which we can control and put away sin. We must allow the Holy Spirit [through the Word] to take control of our soul-life. In doing this, we will be on the right path to the kingdom. However, if we choose not to die to self, then we will never

have the strength that is available to us from the Holy Spirit to stand against the wiles of the devil. The result is that we will be living a carnal and destructive life. All things done in the flesh comes from our soul, our desires, and is evil. This includes our thought patterns, which is why the wisdom of man is of no value. And this is why we are to follow the wisdom of God through His Word, as oppose to the wisdom of man.

For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called.

(1 Corinthians 1:26)

Putting to death the flesh is an *ongoing* choice as we have an ever active, ever dangerous sin nature. Paul stated, *For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells; for to will is present with me, but how to perform what is good I do not find.* **(Romans 7:18)**

Therefore, the act of putting to death the flesh is a daily process, maybe even a minute by minute process. Those who choose to do this will inherit the kingdom, as Christ so clearly states,

“It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing.”

(John 6:63)

Those who choose to live according to their flesh will profit nothing. They will not inherit the kingdom in the age to come. The flesh is the avenue Satan takes to tempt and deceive Christians. If we are not walking in the Spirit, then we have no armor of God and thereby no protection. Man’s flesh and the Spirit are always at war with each other. The potential of the flesh energized by Satan in the life of the Christian should not be underestimated. Given free will, the flesh will direct our choices, making us do what we should not do. The desires of our flesh are at odds with what the Holy Spirit desires for us -- to be free from sin, so that we are holy and acceptable and perfect before God on that Day.

I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. **(Galatians 5:16-18)**

A comparison Scripture is given in **1 Peter 2:11, 12:**

Beloved, I beg you as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul, having your conduct honorable among the Gentiles, that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may, by your good works which they observe, glorify God in the day of visitation.

In the following Scriptures, Paul addresses the matter of being crucified with Christ, and that we are to remain dead to the flesh and live according to Christ, whose Spirit is in us.

I have been crucified with Christ, it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life [soul] which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me. (Galatians 2:20)

And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. (Galatians 5:24, 25)

Our soul (life), which is in our body of flesh, is to be lived by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ through the guidance of the Holy Spirit. There are numerous Scriptures that give heed to walking in the Spirit as oppose to walking in the flesh, for only by the Spirit can we produce fruit that will qualify us to inherit age-lasting life:

For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting [age-lasting] life. (Galatians 6:8)

For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. (Romans 8:13, 14)

Our actions reveal our thoughts. We are to put away thoughts that do not conform to the life and teachings of Christ. We are to discipline our body, kill fleshly thoughts, and renew our mind to the mind of Christ. A

Spiritual transformation starts in the mind and heart. We must allow the Holy Spirit to guide and shape our thoughts and behavior. This process is how we “die to self” daily and how we are able to conquer the flesh.

But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you... (Romans 8:9)

And if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you. (Romans 8:10, 11)

By walking according to the Spirit, by being spiritually-minded, the believer can put to death sinful deeds and have access to life in the age to come. Through the indwelling Spirit, we will be raised a spiritual body on that Day, just as Christ resurrected in a spiritual body.

For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. (Romans 8:5, 6)

The Scriptures are very clear about how we are to conduct our lives during this present time. The gift of the indwelling Holy Spirit is no small matter and should not be taken lightly. We have been given a powerful spiritual gift, our Helper, to help us to fight our battles against wicked spiritual forces and to help us live as we are called, holy and acceptable to God. How can we take for granted the Spirit of Christ? The Holy Spirit is dwelling inside each and every believer, but not every believer realizes how great a gift this truly is. We must not quench the Spirit or resist His teachings, but we must listen to the Spirit as He teaches us the Word of God and then we must do as He says. The Spirit prepares us for the Judgment seat of Christ so that we may qualify for Millennial life.

The third and final great enemy of God is *the devil*. Christians are presently engaged in warfare against “*spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.*” Satan and his angels battle against Christians in order to retain their possessed ruling territory. They will hold this ruling position until a future time when Christ takes them down. At this point in

time, Christ, along with overcoming Christians, will take the scepter from Satan, completing God's work regarding the purpose He created man.

The purpose of the Holy Spirit during this present dispensation is to acquire a bride for God's Son. The Holy Spirit is working inside the believer's spirit to assist with this mission. And the enemy, Satan and his angels, know these things. Therefore, they are presently attacking the flesh with all means, so that there is no move on the Holy Spirit in man to fight back and for man to even realize the purpose for his salvation. If Christians are kept deceived and blinded, then Satan has nothing to worry about or battle over. For almost 2,000 years now, Satan has been successful in bringing the Church to its "lukewarm" condition that it is today. Most Christians are not even aware that they are "*wretched, miserable, poor, blind and naked.*" But for the *very few* Christians today who do have the knowledge of the Word of the kingdom and who remain faithfully obedient, the enemy is there battling fiercely with trials and temptations. Satan uses many forms to attack Christians. He is the great imitator. He seeks to counterfeit the work of God as he and his angels move against Christians. From the beginning of this dispensation, Satan was successful in keeping Christians from knowing the Truth when he placed the "tares" (false teachers) in the Church to leaven the Word of the kingdom.

Today, the Word of the Kingdom is completely leavened in the Church, to the point that it is not recognizable nor taught at all. All Satan has to do is keep the Church in this blinded condition. And one of the ways in which he accomplishes this is by causing divisions within the Church, specifically among those who are blinded against the few who do have the [epignosis] higher knowledge.

But avoid foolish and ignorant disputes, knowing that they generate strife. And a servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient, in humility, correcting those who are in opposition, if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth, and that they may come to their senses and escape the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by him to do his will. (2 Timothy 2:23-26)

Satan causes division by attacking the flesh, keeping Christians carnally minded, desiring the lusts of the flesh and the world, so that their mind is not spiritually discerned. With mature Christians, he is continually tempting them to fall away and go back to the lusts of the flesh and the world. Victory is achieved by resisting the enemy by means of surrounding oneself with the armor of God.

Be sober, Be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Resist him, steadfast in "the faith," knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world. (1 Peter 5:8, 9)

When we sin, we are walking according to our own fleshly desires and giving place to the devil. How can we possibly hear and receive God's Word in this condition? The answer is: we can't. Without the armor of God, we have no protection against the devil. But a properly prepared Christian who does possess the armor of God can enter the battle and be victorious time after time. In the Book of **Ephesians**, instructions are given on how to prepare for this battle:

Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

...Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one.

And take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watching to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints...

(Ephesians 6:10, 11, 14-18)

By surrendering ourselves and totally submitting to the Lord, our strength will come from Him. But when we rely on our own strength, we can do nothing. In conjunction with our submission to Him, we are to put on the

whole armor of God, so that we can stand against the wiles of the devil. And we should not underestimate the powers of these wicked spiritual forces (Satan and his angels), for they are very real and persistent. It is these spirits that we are fighting against and not individuals (flesh and blood) on the earth.

Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth... This is the first part of the armor that we are to put on. The Hebrew translation for “gird” is *hagar* (Strong’s #H2296) a girdle or belt, and means “to fasten your belt” or “to belt or put on or restrain your waist with truth” — “*to prepare oneself for action.*” If anyone had first-hand knowledge of Roman weaponry it was Paul because of his frequent imprisonments. He had closely seen many Roman soldiers fully equipped from head to toe. In preparing for battle, the well-equipped Roman soldier was trained in strategy, weaponry, defense and understanding the enemy. Using the Roman soldier’s armor as a visual example, the Apostle Paul describes the armor of God, the Spiritual armor, as a defense weapon against evil spiritual forces.

The belt was a very important piece to the Roman soldier’s armor. The soldier put around his waist a very wide belt which was the holder for a lot of equipment. Just as the soldier had his loin belt to put on every day to keep his armor together, so also we must apply our minds to the truth, understanding the enemy of our soul and being prepared for battle every day. The meaning of “truth” applies to the deeper truths of the Word of God, the foundational teachings that are specifically related to the knowledge of this very real conflict with Satan and the reason behind it — the battle for kingship. We are to understand and be ever mindful of this battle, so that we know what we are up against and what we are fighting for. In order to be prepared and be victorious in a battle, one must have a well-planned goal and be earnest in his efforts to defeat the enemy. Without this belt of truth, we would not be efficient in battle and our weapons would not be in place. Christians are to mindfully prepare themselves for this battle against the devil, knowing that their strength comes from God; and they are to be diligent in their efforts to defeat him by use of the Word of God so as to possess the territory. And this is what it means “to belt your waist with truth.” Simply put, it is to prepare our minds for this battle with the strength of God. The Apostle Peter presented a similar example when he said,

Therefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and rest your hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ... (1 Peter 1:13)

We need to do whatever it takes to focus our thoughts on the coming kingdom and the battle that we are engaged in against Satan for rulership. This belt of truth is having confidence in the Lord and in His Word, knowing that the battle belongs to the Lord. If we are *strong in the Lord and in the power of His might (Ephesians 6:10)*, one has victory when he enters the conflict. We are to trust in the Lord.

Having put on the breastplate of righteousness... The breastplate is the next piece of armor we are to put on. It is the “righteous acts” performed by the Christian that keeps him from succumbing to the devil’s attack against the flesh, which gives birth to sin. In order for the Christian to overcome and be included in the wedding festivities as the bride of Christ, he must have put on the wedding garment, which is the “righteous acts” mentioned in **Revelation 19:8**. Knowing this, Satan will attempt to keep the Christian from putting on his garment by tempting him to sin. The Christian must be fully prepared with righteous acts, being set apart from the world and putting to death the flesh. These righteous acts are seen in **Galatians 5:22**, which are the fruit of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. All of these righteous acts produce the wedding garment — and a breastplate against the devil.

And having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace... “Shod your feet” means to have your feet firmly planted as a messenger of Christ proclaiming the good news of a future peace. As it is written:

“How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, who bring glad tidings of good things!”(Romans 10:15)

How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news, who proclaims peace, who brings glad tidings of good things, who proclaims salvation. (Isaiah 52:7)

There are two aspects to the gospel in the Word of God. One is connected to the “*peace with God*” and the other is connected to the “*peace of God*.” Within the overall scope of the gospel, there is a part of the message having to do with the “peace with God” directed to the unsaved (**Romans 5:1**) and there is a part of the message having to do with the “peace of God” directed to the saved (**Philippians 4:5-7; Romans 10:15**). This is exactly what is in view concerning the armor. Having one’s feet properly shod has to do with proper preparation relative to the gospel concerning “*peace*,” as it pertains to the saved, and therefore this would be based on the person already possessing the “peace with God.” Therefore, the “peace of God” is in view here, which has to do with the present aspect of salvation, the salvation of the soul, culminating in a future peace when the Prince of Peace is present, having to do with the future aspect of salvation, when the salvation of the soul is realized. This is the message of peace to which one is to properly prepare as a messenger of God.

In **James 3:13**, a distinction is given between heavenly and demonic wisdom. When a Christian is self-seeking, he is tempted to boast and lie against the truth. Scripture says this wisdom is from the devil. Heavenly wisdom is first pure (holy, righteous), then *peaceable*, and gentle.

Now the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace (James 3:18).

As ambassadors of Christ, we are to go about proclaiming the gospel of peace in a gentle and meek manner. The devil’s ambition is to deceive Christians with lies concerning the gospel, thereby causing disputes and divisions in the Church. But when we are well grounded to go out and be messengers of the gospel of “the peace of God,” then we can win against the lies of Satan, for his only intention is to destroy this gospel concerning future salvation. We must have our feet firmly planted and proclaim to believers the good news of the peace of God.

Above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one.” The shield of faith will protect us from the “fiery” darts of the devil. “Faith” is simply believing everything God says in His Word. **Romans 10:17** says,

So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

Satan is the great liar, imitator and deceiver; and he will twist God's Word in order to bring about the Christian's downfall. Just as he deceived Eve when he told her "*Has God indeed said..?*" (**Genesis 3:1**) and, "*You will not surely die*" (**Genesis 3:4**), he deceives Christians today.

But I fear, lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, so your minds may be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. For if he who comes preaches another Jesus whom we have not preached, or if you receive a different spirit which you have not received, or a different gospel which you have not accepted—you may well put up with it! (2 Corinthians 11:3, 4)

In **2 Corinthians 11:3, 4**, Paul was concerned for the Corinthian's faithfulness because of false apostles in their midst preaching doctrines of demons. He was concerned that they would receive the false messages.

For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ. And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light. Therefore, it is no great thing if his ministers also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness, whose end will be according to their works. (2 Corinthians 11:13-15)

We must stand firm in the truth of the Word. Our faith in the Word gives us strength to discern and stand against false teachers, especially those who try and deceive us by portraying themselves as holy men. And the more mature we are in the Word, the greater our faith and strength will be. If our thoughts and actions lead us away from what the Word says, then our shield of faith is not there, and we are allowing the devil to defeat us.

"Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Draw near to God and He will draw near to you."
(**James 4:7, 8**)

The devil will try to stray us away from the gospel of Christ, specifically the Word of the kingdom, by using men to twist the gospel so as to corrupt the doctrine. If one is not careful to study the Scriptures and test these

spirits, then he in time may receive their false doctrine and believe it — *you may well put up with it!* (**2 Corinthians 11:4**)

A good example of this and the way we are to handle it is presented in **Jude 8-10**:

Likewise also these dreamers defile the flesh, reject authority, and speak evil of dignitaries. Yet Michael the archangel, in contending with the devil, when he disputed about the body of Moses, dared not bring against him a reviling accusation, but said,

“The Lord rebuke you!” But these speak evil of whatever they do not know; and whatever they know naturally, like brute beasts, in these things they corrupt themselves.

Michael, though opposing Satan’s deeds, did not revile against the “chief of blasphemers” of being a blasphemer. Rather, he was faithful to abide in God’s word, leaving judgment up to the Lord. These false teachers, who unknowingly follow Satan, do not know the truth of the gospel and speak on matters they do not understand, as natural people and not as spiritual people. Their understanding is based on what they share in common with the carnal and the world. We are to stay away from such people and not share in their evil deeds. By exercising our faith towards God and His word, we will possess the “shield of faith” and will be able to stand against the fiery darts that the devil continually throws at us.

And take the helmet of salvation...

The salvation spoken of here is our future salvation, the salvation of our soul. In **1 Thessalonians 5:7, 8**, “the helmet of salvation” is referred as “the hope of salvation.”

For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk are drunk at night. But let us who are of the day [hoping and watching for the Day of the Lord], be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet the hope of salvation.

For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation [future tense salvation] through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died

for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him. (1 Thessalonians 5:7-10)

The connection between the helmet and hope of salvation is the salvation of one's soul, the realization of one's inheritance in the future kingdom. This hope of salvation keeps the Christian focused on Christ's return and the inheritance. It is this hope that motivates and encourages us to stay strong in the Lord and not to stray away and fall into the hands of the devil. By not watching and hoping for the Day of the Lord, a Christian may ignore such a great salvation and forfeit his inheritance. It would be very easy for the devil at this point to take control of the Christian through his fleshly desires. The Christian would be defeated, not wearing the helmet or the hope that protects his head and mind from Satan's attack. The helmet or hope of salvation is the Christian's hope of being victorious in the battle, of being an overcomer and inheriting the kingdom.

And the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God...

The parts of the armor previously mentioned are all used to protect oneself from the devil, but this part of the armor is the *weapon* that will be used to fight him back — *the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God*. The word of God is “God-breathed” through the Holy Spirit and therefore is alive and powerful:

For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account. (Hebrews 4:12, 13)

Everything we need to know to be victorious in our battle against the devil is in the Word of God. If we deny our flesh and walk according to the Spirit, then we will be able to separate ourselves from that which is evil. The word of God exposes the darkness (Satan) with light.

The Word exposes the devil's lies by revealing the truth. The way in which Jesus' fought back against all three of Satan's temptations was to

quote the Word of God, and He began by saying, “*It is written.*” It is therefore the power of Scripture that is our defense against the evil one. With the last temptation, Jesus rebuked Satan by saying this:

Then Jesus said to him, “Away with you, Satan! For it is written, ‘You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only you shall serve.’” Then the devil left Him, and behold, angels came and ministered to Him. (Matthew 4:10, 11)

If we allow, the indwelling Holy Spirit will teach us all things and prepare us when Satan’s temptations come our way. And if we study the Word diligently, we will be able to discern between good and evil. The solution during temptations will be to quote the Scriptures as **2 Peter 1:19** tells us:

And so we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts...

The light, the Word of Truth, is the sword that we will use to defend ourselves against the enemy of our soul. Unfaithful Christians have a barrier to overcome — the god of this age has blinded their minds. Because of Satan’s deception, Christians who do not believe in the gospel of the glory of Christ will be defeated. They have no weapon to fight back, because they do not allow the Spirit to teach them. They think as the world thinks and they follow the doctrines of men, exactly the state of mind Satan wants them to be in. If we live and worship according to the flesh, we are actually following Satan.

God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth. (John 4:24)

The Word of God, empowered by the Holy Spirit, teaches us the whole Gospel of Christ, and is the *only* weapon able to defeat Satan. It should be a living force in our lives. In all things, whether in prayer, worship, or in our ministry, we must do everything in spirit and truth. For in this, we will have overcome the world, the flesh and the devil.

