

Ephesians 6:10 "Satan Explained" **The understanding of Satan will help us in our spiritual warfare**



If you have not been here, we are studying spiritual warfare in verses 10-20 and it comes at the end of the book after Paul has explained the great salvation of our God: God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, working in unity and their respective task to bring us sinners like us to eternal life, to forgive our sins, to bless us eternally and then to enable us to live as children of light in this fallen and dark world. He has many exhortations about how to do that: how to live as a husband and a wife and a parent and a child, an employer and employee, and he knows this is not an easy task and so he says this is how you do it.

Beginning at verse 10:

"Finally, be strong in the Lord, (or be made strong in the Lord) and in the strength of his might. Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore, take up the full armor of God, so that you will be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm. Stand firm therefore, having girded your loins with truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; in addition to all, taking up the shield of faith with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. And take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit which is the word of God.

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, and pray on my behalf, that utterance may be given to me in the opening of my mouth, to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in proclaiming it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak."
(Ephesians 6:10-20)

This passage is one of the major passages that Christians have looked to for two thousand years, to strengthen them in their pursuit of godliness, in their seeking to put to death those sins that remain in their hearts and minds, and put on Christ-likeness, and live for the glory of Christ in this world. As we have already seen in the previous messages, Paul is bringing this picture of a Roman soldier that is covered from head to toe in armor, and he says this is the attitude, this is the dressing, that you must wear to carry on this battle for truth. To live as a husband, you must put the armor on. To live as a wife, you must put on the armor of God—all of it. To live as a parent, who loves their children and shows grace to them, you must put on the armor of God. To children who are tempted to rebel against their parents or to not obey them—put on the full armor of God and resist the devil and his wiles. To employees who are tempted to grumble and complain and rebel against their unreasonable employers—put on the full armor of God that you may not sin. The same with employers to remember that you have a master as well—put on the full armor of God that you may treat your employees as a Christian should treat them.

This is not just an independent picture that Paul paints from the rest of the book, he is trying to say, that if you want to live under the grace of God and bring glory to Christ, and spread his gospel in the world, and live a Christ-like life, and make a difference in your family and school, and at work, and in every place you are, as a shining light of the gospel in a dark world you have to put on the full armor of God every day before you speak to your wife, your

husband, your children or your parents, before you go to work; before you speak to your employee and those who are under you, before you go to school, before you go to the grocery store, before you get in your car and drive on the streets that display fallen humanity everywhere you go. This is not an option. It is not something to put in the back of your mind and pull out when you really need it. He is saying this is a priority—be made strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might; believe in the absolute sovereign power of God and that he has strength to give to sinners to live a different life; and live in submission to this God, in Christ, in the Lord, remembering his humble birth and his humiliating death for sinners like you that he was in war. And he had to fight every single day of his life to bring eternal life to people like you and me, and he died upon a cross in that battle and rose from the dead, and he did not retire. He ascended to heaven and is now ruling all things by the word of his power, and bringing all things to the consummation when he eradicates sin and evil from this universe and makes all things new. He is coming again.

Christ dedicated himself in his life on earth as a man and now as our exalted God-man; he is still dedicating his life to fight against evil, to overcome evil through the hearts of people who have found his strength, his grace, his mercy, and have been freed from the domination of the evil one in this world. So, we find in this passage, a call to war; that Christians should expect it will be war, not only from the sin that we find in others in the world who may bring sin into our day, or into our country, or into this world in various ways; that we should expect there to be evil that will continue until Christ comes. But we also are called to say and to expect, that in Jesus Christ there is strength to resist the evil one, to overcome evil done to you, not with more evil but with good. There is power to shine as a light in this dark world as well as to deal with our own hearts: to overcome evil thoughts and temptation to sin, to overcome outburst of anger, covetousness, depression, greed, and to overcome temptation to moral sins or immoral sins that will destroy your mind and your life, your future marriage, your children's lives and everything else.

There is strength from God that comes from putting on the full armor: first believing the truth of Christ and living by faith in him every day, and then as we saw last week, putting on the full armor of God, not just the helmet of salvation, and saying, "Well, I know now I'm thinking right and I'm protected by the helmet" and you refuse to take up the sword of the spirit, which is the word of God and prepare that mind to understand God's truth and God's ways, and be ready as Jesus was in the wilderness to resist the devil with the truth of God that he may flee from you. We can't just take up the sword of the spirit and not put on the breastplate of righteousness, and become experts in the bible and not have joy in the righteousness of Christ that covers our sins before a holy God and makes us acceptable to him. It does not good to become a walking bible encyclopedia, and for some people that is what they think a Christian is. They can know where everything is and understand everything about the bible, and think they are OK, but they are not. Because their heart, without the righteousness of Christ, and a thanksgiving that God has made you his child and covers you with a righteousness not your own, will not protect their heart from being wounded by the devil.

We must take up the full armor of God from head to toe every day. You say, "That is a lot of trouble." Well it was a lot of trouble for Jesus to go to the cross for us. And I am not being sarcastic when I say that we live in a day of shallow and feeble professing Christianity, where people want heaven and a church that has everything they could possibly think of, but they are unwilling to discipline themselves for the purpose of godliness: to pray faithfully, to read God's

word faithfully, to be faithful to the church of Christ of which he is the head today, to live a godly life at work, to live in the family according to the commandments of husband and wife and parent and child. They want a Christianity that is easy. You get all the benefits without all the sweat. But Jesus said, "That if anyone would come after me and be my disciple let him deny himself, betray himself, and take up the cross daily."

Bear the shame of Christ in this world willing to be persecuted for righteousness sake as he was, willing to put to death sin in the mind and heart as he did and overcame the temptations of the evil one himself. Take up the cross daily and put sin to death. Put on life and follow him. This is not about God providing a place where people can go to heaven after all the misery of this world. It is about God sending his Son to strengthen weak creatures to show the power of God in this world, to carve out a life that is Christ-like and bears the light of God to many others who are dying in darkness; who brings the grace of God and the love of God into lives of others around you so that Christ is glorified in his cross, and resurrection, and ascension, and return; that there is redemption for men, there is a future for sinners, and there is help today to live for the glory of God and for the good of Christ and for the good of others; that this world is not all about sin, all is not pessimistic, all is not darkness because of the nature of man; that Christ has invaded the darkness as the light of the world and the light still shines in the darkness, and it shines through our lives.

Putting on the full armor of God and being made strong in the Lord and believing in the strength of his might is our life; of taking each piece of armor and understanding what it means and how it strengthens us to live for Christ each day. We have to put on the full armor of God ourselves because God has restored to the Christians, through the new birth, and the work of the Holy Spirit in our hearts, a new ability to cooperate with him in our spiritual growth, and he has given us means to use to strengthen our faith and our faithfulness. Those means are prayer—an open discourse with God to enter boldly before his presence and know that we are received every time we pray because Jesus Christ's blood has opened the way to heaven and to the Father in heaven; because we have the word of God, the full word of God to teach us. It is a means that if we will read and listen to the word of God faith will grow—faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of Christ. When the word of Christ is read and proclaimed it will bring faith; and as a result we grow in grace and in the knowledge of Christ through our use of the word of God, but if we let our bibles by the side and read it periodically and read it like Reader's Digest or something, we are not going to be taking up the sword of the spirit which is the word of God every day.

We have to keep our mind immersed in the word of God. And the church is another means of other Christians who are seeking to fight the good fight, who pray for one another, who love one another and encourage one another, who bear one another's burdens when we are struggling with sin or sorrow; and we know that God has a people in this earth, and I am not alone, and God has helped them and he is helping me, and he shall help me to comfort those by the comfort which I am comforted. The church of Christ is a means that Christ has commanded us to use—the body of Christ. That is why Paul said, "Forsake not the gathering of yourselves together as is the habit of some, but encourage one another and all the more as you see the day draw near." We need each other. We need the church of Christ, because Christ has called us to need each other.

There are many more means that God has given for this warfare as we see in this armor, but the thing I am trying to say as we begin our look into the situation in verses 11 and 12

today, is that God has given us two commands and that is to be strong in the Lord—to quit depending upon our own willpower as if we are going to make it through our own volition; to quit depending upon others—our war is not against flesh and blood and our strength does not come from flesh and blood it comes from Christ. Be strong. Be made strong in the Lord remembering Jesus Christ, living by faith in him every day, remembering his bloody death to make us right with God that our hearts would be humble and thankful, remembering his powerful resurrection from the dead so that we can face each day and say, "God has enough strength for me to live for Christ" and believe it. Then to put on the full armor of God and to understand the promise: that God will, in us doing those things, enable us to stand, that we may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

Now, what I want to do this morning, is talk a little bit more about verse 12: "For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places." In other words, other people are not the real problem with our hearts. Our struggle with sin is not with other people. They may be a presence that brings irritation, or temptation to sinful pleasures, or in some other way tempt us to sin, but our problem is really not with them. It is not with our wives changing, or our husbands changing the way they are suppose to, so we can be better, or about our children finally listening to us so we can be happy. That is not the issue. The issue is: for ourselves to have hearts that are like those of Christ—like the heart of Christ.

We speak of David of being "a man after God's own heart" and we've seen it with our study on Sunday nights—(and if any of you are missing those I hope you will come for this is the word of God). We study the life of David and we see how God gave him the most wonderful patience and restraint of anger all that time he was being persecuted by Saul, and gave him inward strength not to seek revenge against those who persecuted him. David was not perfect but there is so much testimony to the supernatural power that God gave him to overcome his own personal sins in order to be a righteous king.

We have a battle with a true enemy, and we need a heart to do battle with him. People are just the symptom. The problem is the evil one trying to entrap us into sin and destroy our lives, our witness, and everyone around us who is in touch with us; because it is impossible for you to sin and not touch another person. Some people say, "Well my sin doesn't bother anybody else. Nobody else knows about it. Nobody sees it. It can't hurt another person." That is simply not true biblically. Adam's sin hurt you and you never saw him sin; and the truth is that when we give ourselves to sin we become less submissive to God and we become more selfish and self-centered than unselfish and other-centered, and the result of that is, that it does affect others.

When we yield to sin, secret sin, it irritates our minds and hearts and we become impatient with others or others are more faithful than we are, and we become irritated with them. Or maybe our family is guessing that secret sin, and we don't want to be exposed. Sin affects everything, and we are called to put on the full armor of God; to resist the evil one and be able to stand firm and strengthen; to live a godly life, a Christ-like life; a life that Ephesians chapters 1-5 is describing.

Now who are these rulers? Who are these powers? Who are the world forces of this darkness—the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenlies? And of course we know that ultimately it is Satan; the one who tempted Adam and Eve to sin; the one to tempted Jesus Christ himself to sin. The gall of this enemy to come to the Son of God and think he was more

powerful than Christ; that he could conquer Christ! That is the kind of pride and arrogance that Satan has as a fallen angel.

There is a lot of confusion about Satan, and his angels and spirits, and things of that nature; and how it is that we struggle against these unseen spirits; this unseen enemy; that we do not see with our own eyes, who is at work in the world and against us in our lives. So what I would like to do this morning is for us to turn to Revelation chapter 12. So, open your bible if you will, and I want us to see how Jesus Christ revealed to the Apostle John on the Isle of Patmos the work of Satan in this world, as well as His victory over him, and the hope that those who are believers in Christ can live a godly life in spite of this evil one.

Anytime you get into Revelations people hyperventilate and say, "Oh, is he going to teach my personal view? Or is he going to give us the secret to Revelations so we will finally understand it?" I am not going to do that because I don't have that, but there are some things I believe I understand and one of these is this: that at the end of Revelations 11 we have the final judgment of all men. Right there in the middle of the book, not waiting to the end now. In verse 15 it says,

"Then the seventh angel sounded; and there rose loud voices in heaven saying, 'The kingdoms of the world has become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He will reign forever and ever!' And the twenty-four elders, who sit on their thrones before God, fell on their faces and worshiped God, saying,

'We give You thanks, O Lord God, the Almighty, who are and who were, because You have taken Your great power and have begun to reign. And the nations were enraged and Your wrath came, and the time came for the dead to be judged, and the time to give their reward to Your bond-servants the prophets and to the saints, and to those who fear Your name, the small and the great, and to destroy those who destroy the earth.'

And the temple of God which is in heaven was opened; and the ark of His covenant appeared in His temple, and there were flashes of lightening and sounds and peals of thunder, and an earthquake, and a great hailstorm."

This is a scene of Christ coming for the final judgment of all men. And here it is in chapter eleven. What does that mean? Well, along with me there are many that believe that the book of Revelations is given in about seven scenes, or I guess you would say cycles, of what is going on between the first and the second coming of Christ; between his coming and the final judgment of all men in the new heavens and the new earth, and that Revelations eleven ends one of those cycles, and a new one begins in chapter twelve. So we look at chapter twelve not as what happens after the final judgment, but as coming back and saying, "This is a picture of what occurs between the first and second coming of Christ." And I believe that is accurate.

And what we have here are three pictures in Revelations 12. And this is all helping us to understand who these principalities and powers are: what power do they have in this world today and what hope does the puny, little, weak, Christian have against such great powers. We need to understand this to put on the full armor of God and fight with hope.

The first scene is in verses one through six of Revelations twelve, and it says,

"And a great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars; and she was with child; and she cried out, being in labor and in pain to give birth. Then another sign appeared in heaven: and behold, a great red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and on his heads were seven diadems. And his tail swept away a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman

who was about to give birth, so that when she gave birth he might devour her child. And she gave birth to a son, a male child, who is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron; and her child was caught up to God and to His throne. Then the woman fled into the wilderness where she had a place prepared by God, so that there she would be nourished for one thousand two hundred and sixty days." (This is three and a half years.)

What in the world does that mean? Well, it is a vision that was given to John by Jesus Christ, and as we see in many places in the Scriptures, these visions are given in symbols and figures that represent certain people or truths, and it is not hard to see what the red dragon represents. He represents the evil one. Have you wondered why, in almost every major culture of the world, in its ancient literature there were dragons? And that evil was represented in dragon form. That is not hard to read and study in anthropology and see it. Even in remote tribes of the world there is this serpent that is represented as a form of evil.

Then there is this child who is born. Who is this child? Obviously this child is a male child who is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron. It is the Lord Jesus Christ: God the Son. And he goes through the process of birth. And the red dragon tries to destroy him, but he is caught up to the throne of God. He come through it all safely and ascends back to God. That is the life of Christ, and his ascension to heaven, and his present rule by the hand of God the Father.

Who is the woman? Well we have hints of it in verse one: "Clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars. And she was with child." And what we have here is a symbol of people of God, Israel, twelve stars in her crown representing the twelve tribes of Israel who gives birth to the child. And that is exactly the history of the Old Testament. That as James was talking in Sunday School this morning, I was going to bring out in Genesis 3:15 in the service. We didn't plan that, but the bible shows in Genesis 3:15 that God promised Satan that there would be enmity between Eve and himself. In other words, that Eve would come no longer to be his follower, but his apposer. She would be saved; and that there would be, after Eve, a battle in all of history between Satan's seed (that is those who were fallen), and Eve's seed, those who were redeemed.

And that has been the history of the world since then: the battle between not just good and evil, and Christ and Satan, on a cosmic sphere, but the battle between Christ's people and those who are of the evil one. And God promised in Genesis 3:15 that the woman would have a seed that was a male who would come to birth in this world, and he would bruise Satan on the head while Satan would bruise him on the heel. In other words, this seed of the woman would come and destroy and crush the head of Satan. And that is what this vision is describing. John is going right back to the beginning here, and he is saying, "This is what history is about." It is about a woman who gives birth to a son, and this son is the redeemer of fallen men. And Satan tries to destroy this child before he can accomplish the redemption and destroy Satan. But this child finishes his work, and he ascends back to God, and the woman flees into the wilderness to a place prepared for her by God. And there she is, nourished for a thousand two hundred and sixty days.

This woman represents first of all Eve who was promised this seed. Then it represents Israel, the twelve tribes whom God allowed to live in spite of their sins until Jesus was born of the woman Mary in Bethlehem: the seed of Eve, the seed of Abraham, the seed of David, the seed of Mary, not of Joseph but of Mary, the seed of woman. And that is representative of the true believers of all ages whom God first brought physically out of Israel. And now that woman, who gave birth to the child and the child ascended to heaven, flees into the wilderness. She is

the bride of Christ. She is the woman who represents the people of God of all ages, and now she is in the wilderness and being nourished by God.

Well, that is the first scene. So we see that Satan tried to destroy Jesus Christ when he came. You remember what happened in Bethlehem and what Hared did to the babies: every baby under three years old? The Roman soldiers took the babies up by the heels and killed them with the sword to try and destroy the one who was born king of the Jews. Satan tried to destroy Christ at the very beginning. Many times they tried to stone him after he taught, and he walked through the crowds because God protected him. And finally at the right time he gave himself into the hands of his enemies. Not to surrender to Satan but to conquer him. And that is why it says in 1 John chapter 3 that Jesus Christ came for this purpose to destroy the serpent, Satan and his works. And he did. You might say, "How did he do that? I don't see that. This world is full of darkness and there are all kinds of problems in this world. I don't see Jesus reigning as King of Kings and Lord of Lords." Well, that is where you have to understand some things about Satan's work before Christ came and Satan's work after Christ came. And that is what verses seven through twelve are talking about.

There was war in heaven. Now when was this war? Well, we will get to that.

"There was war in heaven, Michael and his angels waging war with the dragon (*which is Satan*). The dragon and his angels waged war, and they were not strong enough, and there was no longer a place found for them in heaven. And the great dragon was thrown down, the serpent of old who is called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; (*That is his job. He is called the deceiver.*) He was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him. Then I heard a loud voice in heaven saying,

'Now the salvation, and the power, and the kingdom of our God and the authority of his Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren has been thrown down, he who accuses them before God day and night. And they overcame him because of the blood of the lamb and because of the word of their testimony, and they did not love their life even to death. For this reason, rejoice, O heavens, and you who dwell in them. Woe to the earth and to the sea, because the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, knowing that he has only a short time.'" (Revelations 12:7-12)

Now many times this has been seen as what happened before Adam and Eve were made, that there was rebellion in heaven, and there was. And that is why he comes to Adam and Eve as one who is evil. Rebellion had already occurred. But this passage appears to be talking about something special that happened at the coming of Christ. In your bible turn with me to Luke chapter ten, we are going to look up three scriptures. I want you to follow through with these verses. This is about your personal war with the evil one incarnate and its effect upon your life. And if you're not interested in this that shows something already: that he has blinded your minds. The bible says, "He has blinded the minds of the unbelieving that they may not see." So, if this is just fairy tale stuff to you, or you don't care about it, or you think it is ridiculous, the bible teaches that you are blinded by this one. You are like those whom the birds of the air come pluck the seed off of the hard ground before it takes root; before the word of God comes into your mind and heart. And you are a dupe of the evil one without you even knowing it.

In Luke chapter ten we find in verse eighteen these words, Jesus said to them, "I was watching Satan falling from heaven like lightning." Now why did he say that? Did he mean that before the fall of Adam and Eve he saw Satan fall from heaven like lightning? I don't believe he did, because the context is: the disciples returning from their journey, the seventy in

verse seventeen, and they had a tremendous success in preaching the gospel, and in healing the sick, and in overcoming the power of evil spirits. In verse seventeen it says, "The seventy returned with joy saying, 'Lord, even the demons are subject to us in your name.'" "

"And he said to them, 'I was watching Satan fall from heaven like lightning. Behold, I have given you authority to tread upon serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall injure you. Nevertheless do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject unto you, but rejoice that your names are recorded in heaven.'" There is something more important than supposedly all the excitement of demons and casting out of those kinds of things and that is: the soul redeemed by the blood of the lamb, and the giving of eternal life; this is a greater miracle than all of these things. We need to remember that. But he did say something was happening when these disciples, these fallible men, not Jesus himself casting out demons, but these men were casting out evil spirits of others. And he said, "I saw Satan falling from heaven like lightning."

Turn with me to John chapter twelve verse thirty-one. In verse twenty-seven Jesus said that his soul was troubled because the hour had come for his crucifixion and he was telling his disciples, "What shall I say? 'Father, save me from this hour'? But for this purpose I came to this hour."

In verse thirty-one he says, "Now at this time judgment is upon the world. Now the ruler of this world shall be cast out." That is Christ making a statement: that he has come to destroy the serpent, the devil and his works, and in his coming something special was happening in a restriction of Satan's power beforehand. Now ordinary men were casting out demons, not just the Son of God. Now as he was going to the cross he was saying, "Judgment has come upon this world and the ruler of this world shall be cast out" because in his coming to the cross Satan's plan to destroy Christ came to fruition. But in the power and wisdom of God became the victory point over evil. And that is why it says that Christ made a mockery of the powers in heavenly places, because upon the cross he defeated the evil one who was trying to destroy man and God's will. He defeated Satan upon the cross. A new power entered into the universe at that time; when Christ came, when he talked, when he healed, and when he died and rose again.

Turn with me to Matthew chapter twelve. There is so much in this passage. In verse twenty-two they brought many to Jesus: those who were blind, those who were deaf, those who could not speak, and he healed them. The multitudes were amazed and they said, "This cannot be the Son of David can he?" And of course the Son of David is the fulfillment of the Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, prophecies of the new kingdom to come; the new kingdom and the new king to come.

"This cannot be the Son of David, can it be? But when the Pharisees heard it they said, 'This man cast out demons by Beelzebub, the ruler of demons.' And knowing their thoughts, (*Jesus knows all thoughts*) he said to them, 'Any kingdom divided against itself is laid waste, and any city divided against itself cannot stand. If Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself. How then shall his kingdom stand?' That is common sense. You do not destroy your kingdom if you are trying to gain victory. "If I by Beelzebub (*which was the accusation towards Jesus*) cast out demons, by whom do your sons cast them out? Consequently they shall be your judges. But then Jesus said, 'But if I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.'" In other words, I am the Son of David. I am the King and this is my kingdom: overcoming Satan and the evil one, and sin in this world.

And that is the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ extending today. But notice what he said then: "How can anyone enter the house, enter the strong man's house, and carry off his property, unless he first binds the strong man? And then he will plunder his house. He who is not with me is against me." And what that little parable or story in verse twenty-nine means is: that Jesus has entered the strong man's house, Satan's house, the heart of man, and he is the holy thief who first binds Satan; binds the strong man and plunders his house. A new power has come in the coming of Christ. A new order has begun. The King has come. His kingdom has come, and this kingdom is the sign of Satan's defeat in this world in the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. What we have in the gospels are the earthly pictures of things he said about his coming, and about overcoming the evil one, and seeing Satan fall from heaven like lightning.

But what we have back in Revelations 12:7 is the heavenly scene that Jesus reveals to John. Verse seven: "There was war in heaven: Michael and his angels waging war with the dragon; and the dragon and his angels waged war, and they were not strong enough, and there was no longer a place found for them in heaven." Remember that Satan came before God in heaven to test Job. And Jesus is now saying that is no longer possible for Satan.

"They were not strong enough, and no longer was a place found for them in heaven, and the great dragon was thrown down, the serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him...I saw Satan falling from heaven like lightning... and I heard a loud voice in heaven saying..." And this is the explanation for what Jesus says to John: "Now the salvation, and the power, and the kingdom of God, and the authority of Christ have come." This is a description of the first coming of Christ, and bringing in his authority and his kingdom, to free sinners like us from the power of Satan, that ruled without restraint, (very much restraint), in the Old Testament up to that day. But now Christ has come, his kingdom has come; the authority of Christ has come. For the accuser of our brethren has been thrown down who accuses them before our God day and night.

And now new power has come to men, just like the disciples had power to cast out demons. Now Jesus says that the brethren have overcome him, Satan, because of the blood of the Lamb. This is after the cross. And because of the word of their testimony they held fast to the truth, they held fast to Christ, and they had strength to overcome the evil one. They did not love their life even to death. Now that is called Christianity. When you come to Christ, you are coming to the one who has died for you and was raised from the dead that you may die to yourself and rise for him in life. And that means no longer to live for yourself, no longer to love your own life as the most important thing, but to live to become like him, to bear witness of him to all those around you and who know you, and to not let even death stop you to being faithful to doing that task; not letting the world, the flesh, the devil; not letting your own personal desires to temptations to certain lust that seem to be powerful toward you; that these are the people who found in Christ the King, and who were born again into his kingdom, and they found that they had strength over the evil one and his temptations to sin that they did not have before, because now Christ has come and they overcame Satan.

This is a picture of what will happen: they overcame Satan by the blood of the Lamb and for this reason in verse twelve: "Rejoice, Oh heaven and you who dwell in them, woe to the earth because the devil has come down to you." This is present tense. He is now down on earth having great wrath, knowing that he has only a short time. That is our great hope. He has only a short time to plague this world. We have only a short time to live in this world. We have only,

(as Peter told Christians in 1 Peter five), a short time to perhaps suffer in this world. The time is short. That is the good news: Christ came; he bound the strong man from taking over the hearts of his believer, his people of his kingdom residence.

Now they have great confidence that by him they can overcome the evil one, and that it will be seen in the end of all things that Christ had power; he gave power to weak people, and they overcame the greatest enemy of God by faith in putting on the whole armor of God and fighting the good fight every day. That is how God is glorified it is the meta-narrative. It is the cosmic plan of all history above the things that we see with our eyes; the things we touch; the things we taste. There is a war between good and evil, but it is not an equal war. It is the war of God the Son, against Satan the angel, and we know who is going to win. Christ comes in and he binds the strong man, and cast him out and plunders his house, the heart of man; and that is how each of us is saved.

Once we were in chains by the evil one and Christ came in and broke off the chains of him in our hearts and now Christ has come to plunder our hearts with grace. He has given us a power over evil that we did not have before and he is working out this in this world and extending his kingdom. The spread of truth, God's truth, God's salvation, has gone far beyond what it went to Israel in the Sinai covenant in this world. The kingdom of Christ is growing. Every day Christ is saving every one of his sheep that he died for, and he is bringing them in to his bosom, and he is building his church that the gates of hell will not prevail against. That is why we have every reason to not be discouraged, to not complain that we have to be at war, to refuse to take up any pieces of the armor of God because we are lazy. Or refuse to give ourselves heartfelt to a battle against evil because we want to sit on the sidelines and watch. Christ died to overcome evil in our hearts that we may live and overcome evil in our lives.

We are at war. But there is good news. Verse thirteen of Revelation twelve says: "When the dragon saw that he was thrown down to the earth he persecuted the woman who gave birth to the male. That is the church. And the two wings of the great eagle were given to the woman in order that she might fly to the wilderness to her place where she was nourished for a time from the presence of the serpent. And the serpent poured water like a river out of his mouth after the woman that he might cause her to be swept away with a flood." Satan has now turned his attention from trying to destroy and prevent Christ from coming into this world, now to the followers of Christ, the woman, the church, the bride of Christ. Now he pours out waters to destroy the Church of Christ any way he can. He prowls about like a roaring lion, just to find one person in a congregation as it says in Hebrews twelve that will be a root of bitterness and defile many.

That is why we have to guard our own hearts because everything we do affects others. We find here that Satan when he was thrown down persecuted this woman and poured out water like a river and there will be the pursuit of Satan to destroy the people of God until Christ comes. In verse sixteen the earth helped the woman and this is all a figure. "The earth helped the woman and the earth opened its mouth and drank up the river which the dragon poured out of his mouth." Now what in the world does that mean? It is a figure. It is imagery. That God and his providence reigning over heavens and earth will not allow Satan to destroy the woman, the Christian, the church, and he has preserved it all these ages. Think of the wars against Christianity. Think of the wars against humanity for two thousand years and yet the church of Christ is still going on. You cannot kill. The church will not be destroyed because Christ has bound Satan to extent which he, the evil one, cannot now plague the people of God. He has

restrained him and bound him from certain freedoms he had before. And that is encouraging to the Christian. We are not alone. It is not impossible to overcome evil in our hearts and to live righteously in the mist of evil in this world.

Sometimes I think people in our generation think that because of the mobility, because of the technology and the communication, we are in a special category as Christians: it is harder for us to live as Christians than other people were in history, and therefore God kind of excuses us from not being faithful; not making those priority of choices to love Christ and keep his commandments; to let his commandments determine how we live instead of letting how we live determine how we keep his commandments. That is not true biblically. It is not true in this passage, because it says in verse seventeen: "The dragon was enraged with the woman..." (That is, the people of God that gave birth to Christ and now are the people of God since he ascended.) "The dragon was enraged with the woman and went off to make war with the rest of her offspring..." (the seed of the woman)...against the seed of the serpent" (that is every non Christian). He went off to make war with the rest of her offspring who keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus.

This is the biblical identification of what is a Christian. This is the biblical description of how Christians live in a world in which Satan is doing everything he can to destroy their lives. They hold to the testimony of Jesus: that he really is the Son of God. That is what life is about: that he really died on the cross because he loved me and gave himself up for me and atoned for my terrible sins; that he really rose from the dead, and he is alive today, and is ruling this universe, and bringing it to completion, and has a purpose in my life to shine as his light in the darkness, and he is ruling over all things by the word of his power, and he is coming again to make all thing new. And the things that I hope for in this life that fades with the using of them, and decay with the using of them, are not what life is about.

But what it is about is being transformed once again to the image of God, and shining before this world what it means to be a person that loves God with all your heart, and loves your neighbor as yourself, and shows the grace of God and redemption in this world. When you hold to the testimony of Jesus and keep the commandments of God, you have direction of how to build your life and structure your life to reflect Christ-likeness. And you have Christ and his truth to guide you to resist the devil so that he flees from you. You put on the helmet of salvation accomplished by Christ. You put on the breastplate of his perfect righteousness to know that you are always accepted by God. You gird yourself with the belt of truth: that is the absolute truth against any other persons or our own mind's deceptions of what is truth, and you believe the truth because he said it. And you put your shoes on with gospel belief and faith to walk in this world and win battles for Christ. And you take up the shield of faith that no matter what others think and no matter what I feel I know this is true: Jesus Christ is the Son of God and he has revealed God to man and to me! And he has risen from the dead and he is coming again. And the only thing that really matters in my life is that I show his glory and become like him as a testimony to his grace and salvation in this world.

And I take up the sword of the spirit every day before I get out of bed and hear these words before I speak to my wife: "Husbands love your wives as Christ loved the Church and gave himself up for her." I take up the sword of the spirit which is the word of God and hear what it says when it says to me as a wife: Wives be husband lovers and be subject to your husband in all things as to the Lord. And children, young people who profess to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, take up the sword of the spirit which is the word of God and they hear Christ

saying in his word, "Children obey your parents in the Lord for this is right. Honor your father and mother," before you speak to your parents in the morning. Parents take up the sword of the spirit which is the word of God and they hear God say, "Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger but bring them up in the nurture and discipline of the Lord." And to mothers: be husband lovers and children lovers, and on and on we go with the commandments of God till we restructure our lives in the midst of spiritual warfare against one who is so sinful and so stubborn that he will not quiet though Christ has cast him down. And we have this great hope that because Jesus Christ accomplished his work upon this earth, because he has promised eternal salvation and the change of hearts that comes from the new birth by the Holy Spirit that gives us a new ability to cooperate with God, to strengthen our faith through the word and Spirit, and to take up the full armor of God.

We have hope that we can change. We have hope that Christ can repair our marriage, or our family problems, or enable us to live with Christian character at our work; that we don't have to be like the rest of the world; we don't have to follow Satan's wiles because Christ is risen. "Put on therefore the whole armor of God that you may be able to withstand the schemes of the Devil and having done everything, to stand firm."

If you are without Christ, you are alone in your battle against the greatest created power there ever was: and that is Satan and his attempt to destroy your mind and heart and to keep you from Christ. And as long as you stay away from Christ, he wins and you don't even know it. Break the power of sin and self rule and flee to Christ, and he will help you overcome Satan and his rule. And if you are a Christian, have hope. Just because sin is there in your heart and you are tempted in various ways in this world to sin doesn't mean you have lost the battle; for Christ came to enable you to change and not only to change internally but to become a Christ-like-lover of God and man when you can't do that yourself, but also to carve out a life that brings glory to him.

And as Paul said to the Corinthians in 1 Corinthians 15, after talking about the resurrection of Christ from the dead as our great hope, and the future resurrection of ourselves from the dead he says, "Knowing this we know that our labor is not in vain in the Lord." Fight the good fight of faith; put on the full armor of God. Take up the shield of faith. Take up the sword of the Spirit. Take up the means that God has given for you to grow and use them and you will find greater strength against the evil one and you will find greater Christ-likeness entering your heart and mind.