

Is There A Real Spirit World?

Part 4

Satan and his demons are alive, well and very active, although their eventual downfall is assured and their doom absolutely certain.

In the meantime Satan and his followers, spiritual and physical, exist to inflict all the damage they can possibly do to thwart God's purpose and work.

Although Satan is a conquered foe he has been given a limited scope to resist God's work among His people.

Two things we need to keep in mind.

Satan only moves as far as God allows.

Job 1:12 [NIV] *"The LORD said to Satan, "Very well, then, **everything he has is in your hands, but on the man himself do not lay a finger.**" Then Satan went out from the presence of the LORD."*

Satan's attack of God's servant Job was limited, there were lines over which Satan could not pass.

Job 2:4-6 [NIV] *"Skin for skin!" Satan replied. "A man will give all he has for his own life. But stretch out your hand and strike his flesh and bones, and he will surely curse you to your face." The LORD said to Satan, "**Very well, then, he is in your hands; but you must spare his life.**"*

Again we see that God limited the attack Satan made on Job.

This limitation varies from one person to another.

1 Corinthians 10:13 [NIV] *"No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; **he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear.** But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it."*

The society today is filled with moral depravity and sin inducing pressures.

Paul reminds us of God's deep love and compassion for all humanity, by telling us we are **not** alone in our Satan induced temptations.

Any temptation can be resisted because God will help us resist it.

How does this help come to us?

God shows us how to recognise people and situations that will give us problems.

God shows us when we should run from any situation we know is wrong.

God encourages us to pray to Him specifically about any temptation, calling out for help.

God encourages us to seek and make friends with those who have come to love God and can offer us help.

2 Timothy 2:22 [NIV] *"**Flee the evil desires of youth, and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, along with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.**"*

We should flee from situations and places where our personal weaknesses will cause us to succumb to temptation.

We need to learn how to engage in this spiritual warfare. It is spiritual, in our mind and spirit, rather than physical involving our body and the pain that can be induced.

Ephesians 6:12 [NIV] “*For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.*”

In a spiritual war we need to be protected spiritually and have spiritual weapons to use.

When we understand how Satan attacks and how we can defend ourselves, Satan will overreach himself and unwittingly advance the very purpose he hoped to hinder, our spiritual maturing.

The perfect example of this is found in Jesus Christ the Son of Man.

Satan used Judas as a tool to have Jesus Christ murdered, and looked on His death as a great victory, until Jesus Christ’s resurrection turned His death into the ultimate victory over Satan’s most powerful tool.

Hebrews 2:14 [NIV] “*Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death, that is, the devil*”

The resurrection of Jesus Christ destroyed Satan’s power over death.

As we accept the death of Jesus as a substitute for our deserved death, and join Him in His resurrection [being born again], all fear of death is removed from our mind and spirit and we experience the peace of mind that only Jesus Christ can give us.

John 14:27 [NIV] “*Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.*”

We may still fear the pain of dying but not death itself.

To a Christian death is like a doorway to a better life and likened to sleep from which we will awake.

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 [NIV] “*Brothers, we do not want you to be ignorant about those who fall asleep, or to grieve like the rest of men, who have no hope. We believe that Jesus died and rose again and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him. According to the Lord’s own word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left till the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord for ever. Therefore encourage each other with these words.*”

This is the hope all who have the Holy Spirit living in them have, for Jesus is in them and they in Jesus spiritually, this truth is part of our defence against Satan’s attacks.

Ephesians 6:10-11 [NIV] “*Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armour of God so that you can take your stand against the devil’s schemes.*”

Note:- Certain truths stated in these verses. “*Finally*” indicating what the writer has been working towards.

Our strength will ultimately come from Jesus Christ.

We need the full armour, spiritual defences, if we are to stand against Satan's attacks.

The word "stand" is mentioned four times indicating the position we are to take.

As we examine this spiritual armour we will see that all the parts are defensive except one, which can be used to attack as well as to defend.

Ephesians 6:13 [NIV] *"Therefore put on the full armour of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand."*

"Put on the full armour" is mentioned again to show all that is included must be used constantly.

The Belt of Truth

Ephesians 6:14 [NIV] *"Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled round your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place,"*

The armour of the Roman soldier, on which this is based, was put on first thing every day and the belt was what held everything in place.

John 17:17 [NIV] *"Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth."*

God's Word, the Christian Bible, is the truth.

John 8:32 [NIV] *"Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."*

The truth sets us free from Satan's deception, his lies.

John 14:6 [NIV] *"Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No-one comes to the Father except through me."*

Jesus Christ's words and His life epitomise the truth.

The Breastplate of Righteousness

Ephesians 6:14 [NIV] *"Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled round your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place,"*

This is Christ's righteousness that is referred to, not our own.

Isaiah 64:6 [NIV] *"All of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags; we all shrivel up like a leaf, and like the wind our sins sweep us away."*

Our righteousness is very unacceptable to God.

Romans 4:22-24 [NIV] *"This is why "it was credited to him as righteousness." The words "it was credited to him" were written not for him alone, but also for us, to whom God will credit righteousness, for us who believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead."*

It is the credited righteousness of Jesus Christ that makes us acceptable to God the Father.

Note:- The Roman soldier did not have any armour on his back if he was not facing his enemy and his attacks, he was without defence.

If we turn our back on God we are wide open to Satan's attacks.

Footwear

Ephesians 6:15 [NIV] *“and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from **the gospel of peace.**”*

We have to be ready to go anywhere and to do anything for our Master without being hindered with poor footwear.

1 Peter 3:15 [NIV] *“But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. **Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect,**”*

The hope we have is the Gospel Message of God’s Love for us and what He has done for all of us through the birth, life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ His Son.

Are we fully equipped to explain this hope to anyone who asks us?

The Shield of Faith

Ephesians 6:16 [NIV] *“In addition to all this, **take up the shield of faith,** with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one.”*

The Roman soldier’s shield was large enough to cover every part of his body, and flexible enough to defend him whatever direction the enemy attack came from.

Faith in God’s promises is what we use in every part of our life right now.

Faith is **not** just what we believe but what we base our life and actions on, God’s promises.

Romans 10:17 [NIV] *“Consequently, **faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ.**”*

If we are daily reading and meditating on God’s Word, the Christian Bible, we will have this shield of faith to defend us from Satan’s attacks.

Helmet

Ephesians 6:17(a) [NIV] *“Take the helmet of salvation*”

Salvation is our being saved from the end result of our rebellious, sinful life.

1 Thessalonians 5:8 [NIV] *“But since we belong to the day, let us be self-controlled, putting on faith and love as a breastplate, and **the hope of salvation as a helmet.**”*

Our hope of salvation is the helmet that protects our mind from all the doubts that Satan will try to put into our mind.

The Sword

Ephesians 6:17(b) [NIV] *“..... and the sword of the Spirit which is the word of God.”*

This is the work of the Holy Spirit in us.

When the Holy Spirit and God’s Word are joined we have a very powerful weapon.

John 14:26 [NIV] *“But the Counsellor, **the Holy Spirit,** whom the Father will send in my name, **will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.**”*

Holy Spirit brings God’s Word into our minds when needed.

Luke 12:11-12 [NIV] *“When you are brought before synagogues, rulers and authorities, do not worry about how you will defend yourselves or what you will say, for the Holy Spirit will teach you at that time what you should say.”*

Guides our thoughts and words when we are challenged as to our hope.

Let us revise the application of each part of this spiritual armour that God wants us to wear every waking hour of our life.

Belt/Truth

Satan fights with lies, and sometimes his lies at first sound like the truth, but we as believers have God’s truth which can defeat Satan’s lies.

Breastplate/Righteousness

Satan often attacks our *“hearts”*, that is the seat of our emotions, self-worth and trust in God’s righteousness that is credited to us as a response to our total trust [faith] in what God has done for us through Jesus Christ.

Footwear – Readiness to go anywhere

Satan wants us to think that telling others the Good News of what God has done for us through Jesus Christ is a hopeless task.

The job is too big and all the negative responses are too much to handle.

Matthew 28:18-20 [NIV] *“Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”*

This is our commission from God, the very reason we have been called and enlightened at this time.

Shield – Faith

What we experience is Satan’s attacks in the form of insults, setbacks and temptations.

Faith in what God has promised, although most is yet to be fulfilled, will protect us from these constant attacks.

Helmet – Salvation

Satan wants us to doubt God, Jesus and our salvation.

The saving work of God is not something we can physically see in our lives.

Salvation is in our mind and *“human”* spirit, [Job 32:8] the saving work of God is in the unseen spiritual world, [Proverbs 20:27].

Sword – Holy Spirit and God’s Word

The sword is the only part of this armour that can be used in an offensive way, as well as defensive.

When we are tempted we need to trust in the power of God’s Word and the Holy Spirit.

Prayer – Communication with our Creator and Captain

Ephesians 6:18 [NIV] *“And **pray in the Spirit on all occasions** with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints.”*

Any defence and attack in warfare is very weak and easily overcome unless we have good, instant communications with our headquarters.

Constant prayer in all situations is essential so we are guided by God’s Holy Spirit at all times.

Roman 8:14 [NIV] *“because those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.”*

We **cannot** be children of God unless we are led by the Holy Spirit, and prayers are the means of receiving our guidance from God.